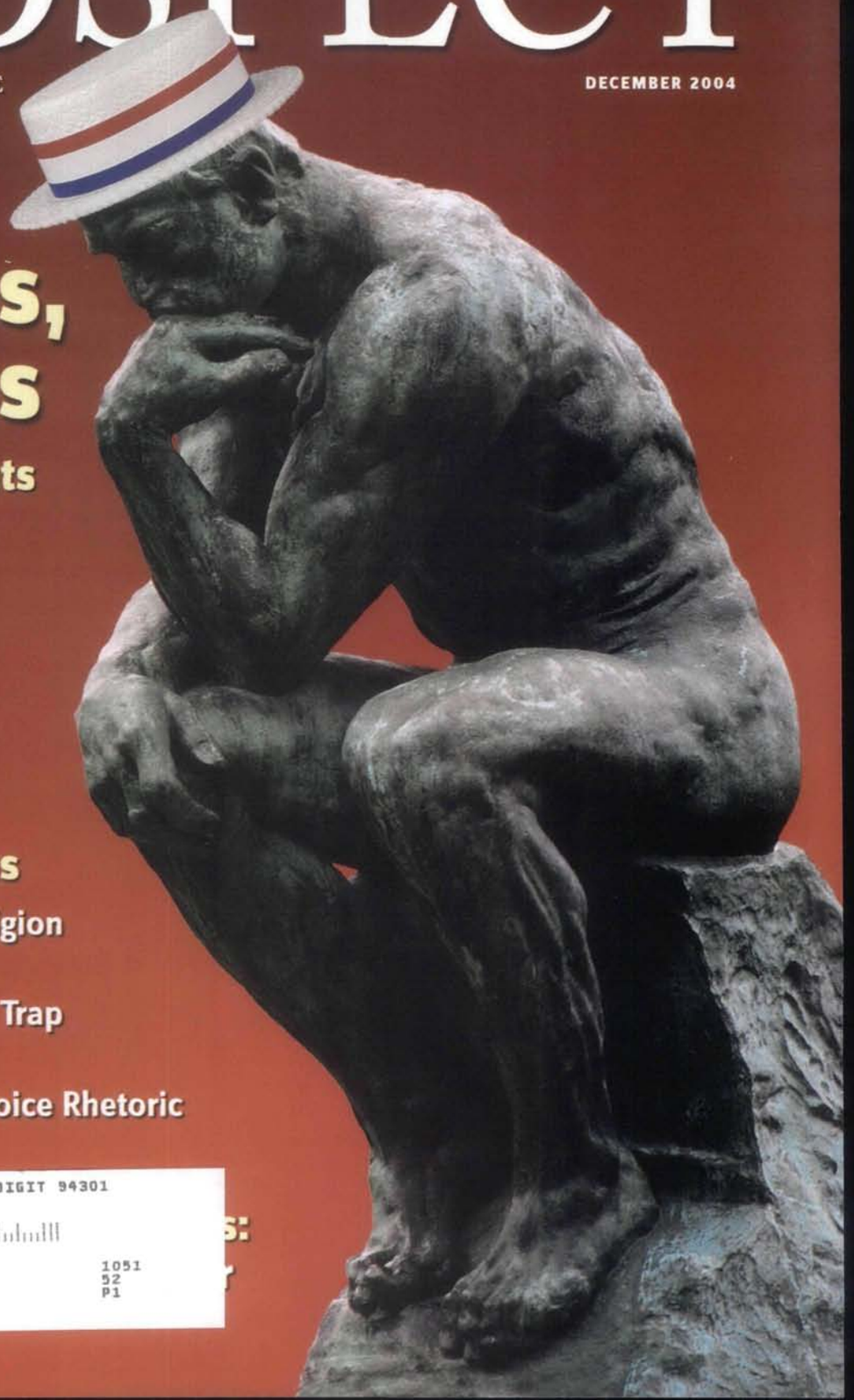
PETER W. GALBRAITH: THE INTELLIGENT WAY OUT OF IRAQ

THE AMERICAN PROSPECT

LIBERAL INTELLIGENCE

DECEMBER 2004



Decisions, Decisions

What the Democrats need to do now

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THE AMERICAN PROSPECT



"I counted at least six different U.S. political strategies for how to handle Iraq's political transition. Each foundered ...." PAGE 29

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COVER *Photo illustration by Aaron Morales and Jennifer Over*

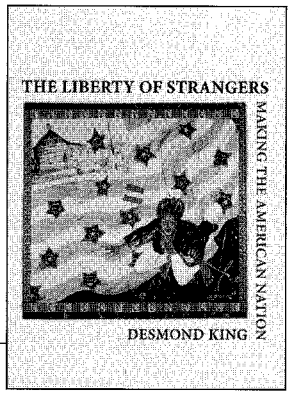
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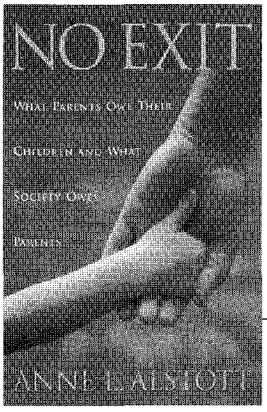
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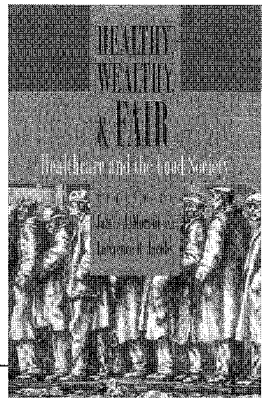




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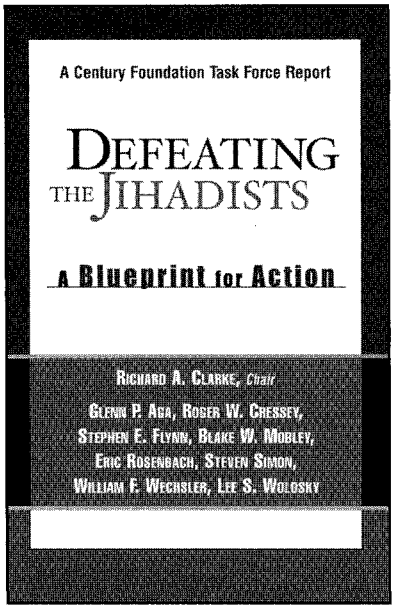
Winning the War on Terrorism

DEFEATING THE JIHADISTS
A BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION

A Century Foundation Task Force Report

by

RICHARD A. CLARKE, GLENN P. AGA,
ROGER W. CRESSEY, STEPHEN E. FLYNN,
BLAKE W. MOBLEY, ERIC ROSENBACH,
STEVEN SIMON, WILLIAM F. WECHSLER,
AND LEE S. WOLOSKY



The international jihadist network of radical Islamic terrorist groups is far more extensive than just al Qaeda. More than a dozen groups in at least twenty countries around the world are part of a terrorist network that has conducted twice as many attacks in the three years since September 11, 2001, as it did in the three years prior to that date. *Defeating the Jihadists: A Blueprint for Action* (Century Foundation Press, 2004), a Century Foundation report prepared by a task force assembled and chaired by Richard A. Clarke, assesses the nation's successes and failures on homeland security and offers a detailed plan for a stronger, more effective strategy for dealing with jihadists, including al Qaeda.

> *"It is imperative that we implement effective policies that address the causes, conditions and misunderstandings that have brought the world to the current impasse. The Century Foundation's* Defeating the Jihadists: A Blueprint for Action *builds on the findings of the 9/11 Commission, and provides a detailed plan for creating a more secure world. It is essential reading."*
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Morals of the Election

What has the past half-century of our history achieved if not a moral transformation? Equal rights and respect for black people have been a moral cause. So, too, have equality for women and open acceptance of gays. Liberals have advocated each of these causes, often turning to the courts when elected leaders were slow to respond. Insofar as politicians have welcomed and supported these movements, they have chiefly been Democrats. And the Democratic Party has paid for its principles from one decade to the next, losing support in the South, among men, and among those with more traditional beliefs.

By the 1990s, though Democrats still had a rough parity with Republicans, they were no longer a majority party. The 2000 election proved the tipping point, and 2004 has finished the process, reducing the Democrats to a minority position. As the Democrats' Senate losses confirm, the political realignment of the South is now a done deal. In the presidential vote, a substantial Republican majority among men has outweighed a smaller Democratic majority among women. And the reaction against gay marriage has triggered a huge evangelical turnout, probably tipping Ohio and thus the Electoral College.

A party can make only so many enemies until it can no longer do any good for people who need it.

Could any of this have been avoided? Only at the margins, though margins matter in close elections. The campaign for same-sex marriage was to 2004 what the Nader campaign was to 2000. Although they worked their effects in different ways—Ralph Nader diverted support from the Democratic nominee, while the gay-marriage issue brought out the Republican vote—both were the product of groups on the left that have little interest in majoritarian politics.

The gay movement thought it could win from judges what the electorate overwhelmingly opposes. In a decision that was bad law and worse politics, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court set the issue in motion. Then local officials cocooned in San Francisco and other liberal areas contributed to the countermobilization that resulted in 11 states passing constitutional bans on same-sex marriage. If the gay-marriage movement were only self-defeating, its significance would have been limited. But the damage was wider.

During the fall campaign, many people said that this election was "the most important of our lives." It was, and when the Democrats lost it, an era came to a close. George W. Bush's 51 percent of the vote may seem too slim a margin to produce conservative hegemony, and ordinarily it wouldn't have that effect—except that Republicans have now consolidated control of the government. The Democrats' prospects for regaining a congressional majority are dismal. The party has lost not just the Deep South but also such border states as Tennessee and West Virginia, not to mention the Mountain States and the Plains. And, as the Texas redistricting showed, domination is self-reinforcing.

Judicial entrenchment will be the next step. Given the likely vacancies on the Supreme Court, conservatives may well get the additional votes to undo not just affirmative action and *Roe v. Wade* but also a long line of precedents regarding governmental powers. Goodbye to a good deal of labor and environmental regulation.

This shift will likely take years to play out, but the implications will eventually become inescapable. Conservative domination of the Supreme Court will prevent minority groups and reformers from turning to judges for vindication of their view of the law. These groups—and liberals generally—will have no other way forward except the rebuilding of a political majority.

But here we come to a contradiction. Many of us have expected that the opportunity for a new Democratic majority lay in the growing Hispanic vote, which Bill Clinton and Al Gore won by nearly 2-to-1 margins. This year Hispanics turned out in much higher numbers, but, according to exit polls, the share voting for Bush rose to 44 percent after a Republican campaign in Spanish-language media emphasizing opposition to same-sex marriage. Unless Democrats draw sharp lines on such issues, they're not going to get the kinds of numbers they need from Hispanics.

Most liberals don't want to hear the message that these voters and others in the red states are sending. But in a democracy, you can only make so many enemies until you can no longer do any good for the people who depend on you. Liberals need to decide what is central to the great moral achievements of the past half-century—and what isn't. Going down to perpetual defeat isn't a moral choice.

—PAUL STARR

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An Uncertain Trumpet

Were the Democrats repudiated as too left wing for the country, especially on cultural issues? Or were they mainly outplayed? Depending on what one concludes, dramatically different remedies follow. In fact, the country was split almost evenly, as in 2000. Democrats would make a grave mistake to take 2004 as a wholesale repudiation. Rather, John Kerry lost the election and Democrats lost ground for four distinct reasons.

First, the Republicans enjoy a structural advantage. As a party they are better financed, more disciplined and strategic, and willing to play far dirtier. They also benefit from captive broadcast media (FOX, Rush Limbaugh, et al.) and docile mainstream media. Once, the press gave itself permission to conclude in hard news stories that Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Bill Clinton lied to the American people. George W. Bush also lied, but the major dailies and networks would not say so.

Second, the Republicans shamelessly used September 11. Despite the palpable lies and bungles in the Iraq War, Bush's people, abetted by a tame media, succeeded in conflating Saddam Hussein, 9-11, and general apprehension about terrorism.

Third, Kerry took too long to focus. He took far too long to make the election a referendum on Bush. Kerry won the Iowa precinct caucuses by not "going negative" against fellow Democrats. Weirdly, his strategists concluded that he should therefore resist being too critical of Bush. Kerry, whipsawed by advisers, sent disastrously mixed signals on the Iraq War. His campaign used the wrong war (Vietnam) to try to credential Kerry as a commander in chief, and then failed to respond immediately to the Swift-boat slanders. When Kerry did finally settle down and focus, in the final weeks, he became an emotionally engaged, tough, and warmly accessible candidate. But by then the Bush campaign had defined Kerry for voters.

If a single moment captured Kerry's failure to play to strength, it was in the second debate when Bush sneeringly declared, "That's what liberals do. They create government-sponsored health care. Maybe you think that makes sense. I don't."

Instead of hitting that one out of the park ("Mr. President, Medicare is a government program. Is that a problem for you? And yes, Democrats indeed created it, and most Republicans opposed it."), Kerry responded, "The president is just trying to scare everybody here, with throwing labels around ... ."

If a Democratic presidential candidate cannot bring himself to say that government, in competent and compassionate hands, can help ordinary people realize their dreams (as Barack Obama was not afraid to say), what is left of the Democratic Party? No wonder swing voters concluded that Bush was clear about what he stood for and Kerry wasn't. Voters do not follow an uncertain trumpet.

Fourth and last, the army of fundamentalists indeed gave the Republicans a hardcore base. But Democrats didn't know how to address that challenge, either. They neither warned mainstream voters of the danger of a theocratic president whose base rejects modernity nor articulated a compelling moral language of their own.

Clinton honored working families. They forgave him for insisting that gays are people.

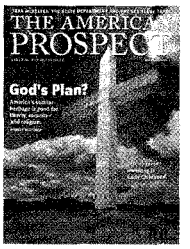
What is the implication of all this? Democrats are being urged to embrace godliness and the traditional family. They surely need an idiom of values that plays in the heartland, but it needs to be their own, not just Republican-lite. Their problem is not that they failed to trim sufficiently on abortion, gay rights, or church-state separation. It is that they seem to be trimming on all fronts, while Republicans are seen as steadfast.

As Thomas Frank and Robert B. Reich have both demonstrated, when Democrats fail to articulate pocketbook issues as values, class resentments become cultural ones. I devoted much of a book (*The Life of the Party*) to this same subject in 1987. Five years later, Bill Clinton won election by declaring, as a matter of values, that people who work hard and play by the rules should not be poor. Middle America forgave him for treating gays as people. But his party failed to build on what Clinton began.

Yes, Democrats paid dearly in 2004 for the fact that the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court and the mayor of San Francisco got ahead of public opinion on gay marriage. But the Democrats' first task is to do a better job championing the struggles and aspirations of ordinary people—as American values. If they fail to do that, abandoning gays and drawing nearer to God won't help them.

—ROBERT KUTTNER

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"I would love to watch a debate between [Gitlin] and O'Neill. But it is flat out false to say that I allowed O'Neill to state his views 'without being called on them.'"

—GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS
Anchor, ABC News, *This Week*

Correspondence

Let the Record Reflect

IN "SWIFTER THAN TRUTH" [November 2004], Todd Gitlin writes that I didn't "call" Swift Boat Veterans for Truth leader John O'Neill on his views when he appeared on *This Week* in August. That's not true. A look at the transcript of O'Neill's debate with John Podesta clearly shows that I challenged O'Neill's assertions with facts and evidence in nearly every one of my interventions.

When O'Neill questioned John Kerry's first Purple Heart, I contradicted him with the accounts of eyewitnesses. When O'Neill claimed that Kerry didn't earn his Bronze Star, I contradicted him with the documentary record. I pointed out that Kerry's account was corroborated by all of his crewmates, corrected O'Neill's false statements, and consistently pressed O'Neill for evidence to back up his claims. O'Neill was also refuted by Podesta, who had equal time to respond to all of O'Neill's claims.

Perhaps Gitlin would have moderated the discussion differently. I would love to watch a debate between him and O'Neill. But it is flat out false to say that I allowed O'Neill to state his views "without being called on them."

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS
Anchor
ABC News, This Week

Todd Gitlin responds:
George Stephanopoulos is right: As the transcript clearly shows, he did call John O'Neill on several of his false claims about John Kerry. I greatly regret my error.

When I read the transcript of the August 4 interview and ask myself, in all honesty, how I could have made such an error *after watching the show*, I learn something both interesting and dismaying (and I say this without pride): O'Neill uttered such a rapid-fire swarm of charges that Stephanopoulos' mass of strong counterevidence left him unfazed. He kept bulldozing his way through contradiction, unstoppably on message.

This was the way of O'Neill's "Swift"-boat group from the start: Dredge up Mekong mud, hurl some, hurl more, and wait for some of it—any of it—to stick. In the smear game, impressions are everything. Ignorant or agnostic listeners and viewers are likely to form that impression that where there's mud, there's real dirt.

This was Senator Joe McCarthy's method, after all: Keep associating "communists" and "State Department" and in a suitable climate, you can get away with egregious falsehood. The aura will stick. My main point holds: Mainstream journalism isn't adequate to systematic distortion.

State Speaks

IN TRYING TO SORT THROUGH Tara McKelvey's confusing, innuendo-filled article ["Of Human Bondage," November], I realize the crucial problem: She refuses to believe the empirical reality that tolerated, regulated, and legalized prostitution is one of the biggest factors, worldwide, in creating modern slavery.

Because prostitution is a giant magnet pulling people into slavery—and because it is inherently demeaning to women and children, not to mention brutally dangerous—the U.S. government began implementing an anti-prostitution policy in late 2002. A remarkable coalition of feminists, faith-based organizations, and human-rights activists have endorsed and applauded this position.

Anyone familiar with my office knows we encourage governments around the world to help create alternative opportunities for people used in prostitution. We oppose focusing punishment on sex-slave victims, urging that punishment be directed instead at the traffickers, pimps, brothel owners, and customers.

McKelvey implies that this administration opposes condom distribution to sex-trade victims. This is absolutely untrue. The U.S. government has spent millions on condoms to help slow the HIV/AIDS crisis, targeting high-risk populations including people used in prostitution. However, this practice is not a substitute for freeing people from slavery. We should not fall into the trap of those in earlier centuries who sought to improve health conditions on the slave ships (better beds, better ventilation, and better rations) but allowed the slave trade to continue.

It is not enough to hand out condoms to sex slaves. We must seek to free them and throw the slave traders in jail.

AMBASSADOR
JOHN MILLER
Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons
U.S. Department of State

Tara McKelvey responds:
Ambassador John Miller says I refuse to believe that prostitution has helped create "modern-day slavery." Indeed, I do think women are trafficked because of a complex array of economic and social factors and not mainly because prostitu-

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tion is "tolerated, regulated, and legalized" in certain places—regardless of what Miller believes.

In addition, he says I imply that the Bush administration "opposes condom distribution to sex trade victims." While the administration may not explicitly forbid handing out condoms to prostitutes, it has created an atmosphere of fear and anxiety among people who work with prostitutes and trafficking victims in other countries. Not surprisingly, this has led to unfortunate results. Many health-care workers in Cambodia are no longer helping street children in Svay Pak, for example, because they're afraid of losing funding from the United States for their projects.

Finally, Miller describes the difficulties he has "trying to sort through" my article. It's not surprising that someone like Miller, who sees the problem of human trafficking in stark, moral terms, would be confused by a nuanced approach to the subject.

Separation Anxiety

I FOUND ROBERT KUTTNER'S article in *The American Prospect* headlined "What Would Jefferson Do?" [November] poignant, cogent, and deeply relevant in today's political discourse. As an American Jew, I find the Christian right-wing movement very troubling. As an American, I find it even more troubling. It contradicts the fundamental foundations upon which our republic was established. What is more unnerving for me is that most of the American public doesn't even know it. There seems to be a huge lack of education about the fundamental principles of our Constitution and the fundamental beliefs of the Founding Fathers.

The separation between church and state is a fundamental precept of our constitutional republic, without which our system could slowly begin to break down. The positions of the Founding Fathers and rational progressives need more weight within the public discourse. We need more articles such as yours and more speakers bringing these positions into public debate.

Part of America's great success in the 20th century was our secular pluralism. Without it we would be a very different (and less free) nation.

SAM SILVER
Santa Monica, CA

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WHY ARE 500,000 SOLDIERS AFRAID OF THIS WOMAN?



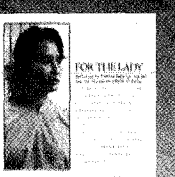
If you were Burma's military regime, you would be too.

Aung San Suu Kyi is one of the world's most famous advocates of nonviolence and the world's only incarcerated Nobel Peace Prize recipient. Known to many as "Burma's Nelson Mandela," she leads an epic struggle for freedom in the Southeast Asian country of Burma. Ruled by a brutal military regime comprised of 500,000 soldiers, Burma is among the world's most repressed countries.

Called "The Lady" by the Burmese people, she is more than just an activist — she is their chosen leader. In Burma's last democratic election, her political party won 82% of the seats in parliament. The regime annulled the results, and Aung San Suu Kyi has been locked up for most of the past 15 years.

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Sales of *For the Lady* benefit the U.S. Campaign for Burma's international campaigns to bring pressure on the military regime. Help free "The Lady" and all 50 million people of Burma by purchasing your copy today.



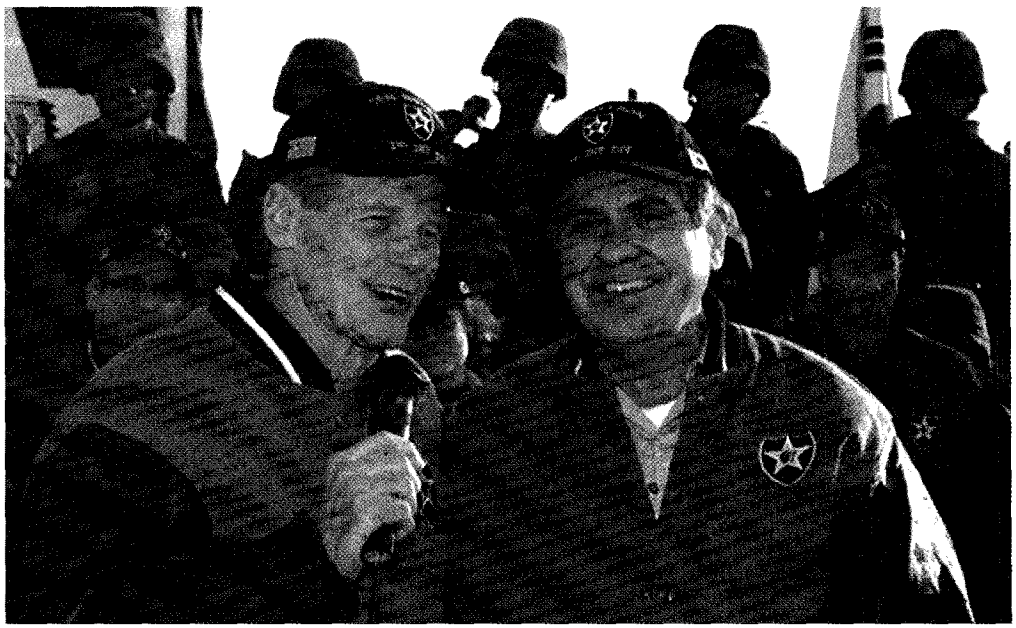
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Devil in the



Are Ozzie and Harriet Next?: Democratic Senators Bill Nelson (*left*) of Florida and Ben Nelson of Nebraska are Republican targets.

A Redder Senate in '06?

AFTER THE PUMMELING they took on November 2, Democrats consoled themselves by thinking that history will be on their side in 2006. After all, midterm elections normally spell congressional gains for the party out of power in the White House. Sure, that axiom didn't apply in 2002, or in 1998 ... but it's a *rule*, damn it, and Dems clung to it as the election-night horror show unfolded before their eyes.

On the Senate side, however, the makeup of the actual seats in play in two years gives Dems little cause for hope. Looking at the 17 Democratic and 15 Republican seats up in the '06 cycle, one is hard-pressed to find a plausible way for Dems to reach a net gain of six—enough to take back power. "I don't think they have a great chance to take back the majority" in two years, says Jennifer Duffy, managing editor and political analyst for *The Cook Political Report*. Indeed, just maintaining the status quo won't be a walk in the park.

Granted, the terrain will be friendlier to Dems than it was this year, when the party had to defend a slew of open seats in red states. In '06, Dems won't likely be on the defensive as much; they just won't have many opportunities to go on the offensive, either. Of the 17 Democratic incumbents up for re-election in two years, four face real Republican challenges: Mark Dayton of Minnesota, Maria Cantwell of Washington, and, as Duffy likes to call them, "the Nelsons—Ben and Bill," of Nebraska and Florida, respectively.

Among the 15 GOP incumbents, it's tough to name a *single* particularly vulnerable candidate residing in a red state. Of the three blue-state Republicans—Lincoln Chafee of Rhode Island, Olympia Snowe of Maine, and Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania—only Mr. Man-On-Dog seems potentially ripe for picking off.

Given the stable playing field, the "key in the '06 cycle is retirements," says Duffy. That might not work to the Dems' advantage, though. The one certain retirement, Bill Frist's in Tennessee, will definitely present an opportunity for them. But six Dems up for re-election in '06 will be more than 70 years old, and several more will be getting close. While the granddaddy of them all, West Virginia's Robert Byrd (currently 87), has made it clear he plans to run for re-election, according to Duffy, the prospect of remaining in the minority for at least several more years may weigh on the minds of some of the others. "I'm wondering if that impacts someone like [New Mexico's Jeff] Bingaman or [California's Diane] Feinstein," says Duffy. "Will they sign up for another six years knowing that there probably aren't committee chairmanships in their future?"

The biggest fear of all is that if, as seems likely, the Democrats remain in the minority through at least 2008, more and more senators will

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Details

"Put your agenda on the front burner and let it boil. You owe the liberals nothing. They despise you because they despise your Christ."
—**BOB JONES III,** president of Bob Jones University, in a congratulatory letter to President Bush

come to share that same thought and start thinking of alternative routes to power and stature. The current spectacle of two Democratic senators simultaneously considering gubernatorial bids—Jon Corzine in New Jersey and Chris Dodd in Connecticut—is hardly a good omen. As our prez might say, pessimism never created a Senate majority.

—SAM ROSENFELD

Sales-Tax Scam

BASKING IN THE GLOW OF his first actual presidential victory, President Bush held a November 4 press conference in which he claimed a broad mandate for big-time "tax reform," the details—or even broad outlines—of which he spelled out neither on the campaign trail nor at the post-election media event. House Speaker Dennis Hastert, however, has spoken of his fondness for the idea of replacing the income tax with a single national sales tax. Vice President Dick Cheney, according to press reports, also likes the idea.

The closest thing to a concrete proposal for such a tax that we have on the table is HR 25, co-sponsored by several House Republicans, which aims to finance the federal government on the basis of what it calls a "23-percent sales tax." This is not, however, a 23-percent sales tax as the term is generally understood; this is adding a $23 tax to an item that costs $100 before tax. Instead, the item would cost $130, with the 23-percent figure arrived at by the unorthodox method of dividing $30 (the amount of tax) by $130 (the after-tax price) and getting 23 percent. So 23 percent means 30 percent.

Even that rate is arrived at only by assuming that the tax base would be extraordinarily broad, with no exemptions for the purchase of any sort of goods. Of course, the current income tax could be lower were it not for the political pressure to exempt mortgage costs and health care, along with a whole raft of special-interest loopholes that have popped up in the legislative process. Why shifting to a sales tax would eliminate such pressures is something on which its advocates remain studiously mute. If a sales tax did get rid of these kind of exemptions, though, eliminating the one for health-care costs would cause an estimated 6 million to 14 million individuals to lose their health insurance. Families with children that currently receive significant help—child credits, education credits, dependent deductions, and so forth—would lose all that and likely find themselves overburdened.

Worse, the 23-percent "estimate" takes no account of the fact that some taxation would doubtless be evaded. Under the current system, income-tax evasion stands at around 15 percent. But as the Brookings Institution's William G. Gale points out, this breaks down into a 5-percent rate for income that is withheld and reported by employers, and a 50-percent rate for non-withholding employers. Under the sales-tax system, merchants could evade the tax by not reporting the sale—so *all* revenue would resemble non-withheld in-

WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING



November was a bad month for schadenfreude. For two weeks in October, it looked like the most maddening man in America was destined for a humiliating fall from power. Blue America was all but squealing in anticipation. But when November broke, there he was on the television: those same smug eyes, that unreflecting and unrepentant smirk. The abyss hadn't opened up after all.

Bill O'Reilly had survived.

You couldn't have missed news of his sexual-harassment suit, although you may well not have noticed its settlement. First, though, let's recap the case (it's simply too delightful not to). On October 13, the day of the final presidential debate, the 55-year-old O'Reilly was sued by an *O'Reilly Factor* associate producer, Andrea Mackris, for allegedly harassing her over a two-year period, eventually (allegedly, allegedly) conducting phone sex with her against her wishes. We can't print the most salacious details, but let's just say that the phrase "plaintiff was repulsed" appears many times in her complaint. Audiotapes involving "loofahs," "falafel," "the little short brown woman," and other obscure objects of desire seemed about to reach the public ear.

But it was not to be. O'Reilly, who had countersued, and Mackris settled both suits on October 28, while the nation's attention was focused entirely on the presidential election. The reportedly $2 million to $10 million settlement seemed to verify that the tapes existed, but the terms of the settlement prevent either party from discussing any aspect of the suits. It seems at this moment that the world will never hear the married author of *The O'Reilly Factor for Kids: A Survival Guide for America's Families* discuss what he wanted to do to his 33-year-old producer in a Caribbean shower.

—Jeffrey Dubner

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BRAVE NEW WORDS

MORE QUALIFIED More rigidly right-wing, as in Dr. James Dobson's remark that there are many Republican senators who are "more qualified" than Arlen Specter to chair the Senate Judiciary Committee

HAS BEEN ACHIEVED Has gotten worse. Outgoing Attorney General John Ashcroft explained in his resignation letter that it was time to go because "the objective of securing the safety of Americans from crime and terror has been achieved."

SOFT LEAKERS Career intelligence professionals with a conscience who have gotten on the bad side of new CIA chief Porter Goss and are being purged

come and possibly be subject to a correspondingly high rate of evasion. In fact, governments around the world have historically found that rates higher than 12 percent produce so much evasion as to be useless and unenforceable.

On the other hand, the very wealthy people who currently suffer the indignities of progressive taxation would not only be freed from that burden but would also see any money they plow into investments go untaxed. Thus, absent a major market crash, wealth would beget more wealth with even less impediment than under the current system. Problems aside, that may give the president all the reason he needs to learn to love the sales tax.

—MATTHEW YGLESIAS

Top of the World, Ma

LOVE IT OR HATE IT, THE World Bank is one of the most influential forces in fighting poverty. Led by James Wolfensohn, the bank provided $20.1 billion for projects in developing countries this year and currently employs 9,300 people.

"It's like a gigantic ship," says Nancy Birdsall, president of the Washington-based Center for Global Development. "It's very hard to turn it, but once it gets turned, it makes a very big difference."

The ship may soon have a new skipper. President Bush will appoint a new World Bank president in 2005, and it's known that Bush would like to make a change if for no other reason than his bias against retaining anyone appointed by Bill Clinton. But Wolfensohn is fighting hard to keep his post.

Officially, Wolfensohn "remains focused on the agenda we have in front of us," says World Bank spokesman Damian Milverton. In November, he traveled to Kazakhstan and India. Wolfensohn's hero is former World Bank President Robert McNamara, who turned the institution around by giving "impassioned speeches and cranking out anti-poverty rhetoric" during his tenure from 1968 to 1981, says Sebastian Mallaby, author of *The World's Banker*. Wolfensohn, appointed by Clinton in 1995 and now reaching the end of his second five-year term, admired McNamara's approach. During his own presidency, Wolfensohn has moved many of the World Bank's employees from the Washington headquarters into offices in developing countries and started anti-corruption programs in 100 nations.

In Mallaby's assessment, Wolfensohn has no intention of giving up his post. The onetime head of Carnegie Hall would like to serve the same amount of time (13 years) that McNamara did. "He'll say, 'Look, I've got a lot of support in European capitals,'" Mallaby explains. "Further, he'll sweeten the deal by saying, 'I'll only serve half a term.'"

If he loses, there's another McNamara in the making: Colin Powell, who's been mentioned as a possible successor. Other names currently floating include mega-broker Charles Schwab; John Taylor, the Treasury Department's undersecretary for international affairs; and trade negotiator Robert Zoellick.

—TARA McKELVEY

Uno, Dos, Tres...

OH, THOSE EXIT POLLS! Stoking Democratic expectations in the afternoon and early evening of election day, only to have them come crashing down as the actual votes came in. Now those polls have been adjusted to more closely reflect the actual vote. And they're still all wet.

At least they are when it comes to the Latino vote. If you believe the National Election Pool's (NEP) exit poll, Bush's support among Latinos leaped from 35 percent in 2000 to 44 percent this November—just about the biggest gain in any demographic that the president registered. Problem is, the poll's national figure is contradicted by its numbers in the individual states.

Political analyst Steve Sailer has done a yeoman's job of matching the national and state totals in the NEP's polls. For instance, the NEP's national poll breaks down the vote into regions, concluding that 64 percent of Latinos voted for Bush in the South. The NEP releases state figures only where Latinos are a large enough share of the electorate to get a big enough sample, and in the South, it has figures for four states: In Texas, if we're to believe its numbers, Bush won 59 percent Latino support; in Florida, 56 percent; in Georgia, 56 percent; in Oklahoma, 74 percent. Texas and Florida alone account for 80 percent of the Latino vote in the South. And because the NEP does report the share of the electorate that Latinos constituted in each state, we know that 253,000 Latinos voted in the other 10 states that comprise the South in the NEP's regional designations. And in order for Bush to have won 64-percent support in the South as a whole, he needed to win 480,000 of those 253,000 votes. The same kind of discrepancies, Sailer demonstrates, exist in the other regions as well.

In short, if you believe Bush really won 44 percent of the Latino vote, we've got a bridge over the Rio Grande we'd love to sell you.

—HAROLD MEYERSON

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Dispatches



Six Feet Over: Mourners hoist Yasir Arafat's coffin, Ramallah, November 12

REUTERS/LANDOV

Life After Yasir

Ariel Sharon has outlived his hated rival Arafat. But now that he's gone, so is Sharon's biggest excuse for not negotiating with the Palestinians.

BY ALUF BENN

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL — YASIR ARAFAT'S death is a historic milestone in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a new starting point in the efforts to resolve the decades-old holy-land feud. It presents an opportunity to resolve the conflict, but lots of political determination and skill are needed from the dueling sides, the United States, and the international community to make it happen.

The veteran Palestinian leader died when the intifada he'd led against Israel since September 2000 had run its course. The Palestinians proved too weak to drive the Israelis out of the occupied territories in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by force. Their suicide bombings in Israeli cities created havoc, but failed to break the Israelis' will to fight.

Nevertheless, the Palestinians withstood Israel's military blows and its demands for unconditional surrender, and they achieved several goals, most notably Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's decision to evacuate the Jewish settlements from Gaza and the northern West Bank, scheduled for next summer. Diplomatically, the Palestinians created a global consensus around their aspirations of statehood, codified in the international road map. They also strengthened the legitimacy of the "Green Line," the pre–1967 armistice demarcation, as the future border between Palestine and Israel, perhaps with some modifications.

Arafat had been a permanent presence in Israelis' worldview for decades. His image developed in stages. First, he was the quintessential enemy, an architect of atrocities, launching his terrorists and Katyusha rockets from across the border to kill Israelis at home and abroad. In 1982, Sharon put him under siege in Beirut; but the Lebanon War was highly unpopular in Israel, and Arafat reached out to Israelis for the first time. Exiled to Tunisia, he turned gradually into a statesman, grudgingly recognizing Israel and grudgingly recognized by more and more Israelis as an inevitable partner. The halcyon days came after the 1993 Oslo Accords. Yitzhak Rabin shook his hand on the White House lawn, and other Israeli leaders followed suit (except Sharon, who refused to do so). At the peak of Arafat's acceptance, in the late 1990s, he became a lovely character in a satiric puppet show on TV. But after violence broke out in 2000, he was demonized again, this time for good. Even left-wing politicians shunned him.

Arafat's disappearance from the scene takes away the central pillar of Israeli foreign policy in the past four years—namely its assertion that "there is no Palestinian partner," recited ever since Arafat rejected Ehud Barak's proposals at Camp David. The logic is simple: no partner, hence no negotiations. This perfectly suited Sharon, a firm believer in topographic security who would like to keep large chunks of West Bank terrain under Israeli control for as long as possible.

But Sharon's territorial aspirations remained hidden behind the official po-

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sition of portraying Arafat as a hopeless terrorist and liar. Israeli politicians competed in suggesting his expulsion or assassination. The cabinet decided last year that Arafat is the main obstacle for reconciliation and should be removed. True to his old habits, Sharon decided to launch a fresh anti-Arafat propaganda campaign posthumously, to tell the world about Arafat's "murderous character," lest he be remembered as a hero and freedom fighter.

All this is over now. Arafat's heirs, Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and Ahmed Qureia (Abu Ala), are veteran peace negotiators, untainted by terrorism, wearing suits and ties rather than their late mentor's uniform. Sharon met both many times, hosting them in his office and official residence and at his private ranch. Abbas, the new Palestine Liberation Organization chairman, has a perfect record of publicly opposing terrorism, having said recently that the intifada has been a mistake. Diplomacy and negotiations, rather than Qassam rockets and suicide bombers, are his favored tools to end the Israeli occupation.

His good reputation notwithstanding, Abbas is facing a formidable challenge. He must consolidate his power in a torn, violent society while convincing the Israelis of his ability to halt terrorist attacks. This is no easy task for any leader, even under better circumstances. But if Abbas succeeds, he would call Sharon's bluff and challenge Israel's pledges of flexibility.

SHARON OUTLASTED HIS LIFELONG rival Arafat. First, he persuaded President George W. Bush to boycott the Palestinian leader and advocate his replacement. Bush sanctioned Arafat's house arrest at Israeli gunpoint in Ramallah. Gradually, even European and Arab leaders, though identified with the Palestinian cause, turned away from Arafat. Now, having survived many political storms in Jerusalem, Sharon holds power and Arafat is gone. His departure, however, brings both an opportunity and a problem for the Israeli leader, bothered as he is with a minority coalition and party rebellion.

The "lack of partner" was Sharon's main argument, or excuse, for his unilateral steps: construction of the West Bank security barrier and launching the "Gaza-plus" pullout. Since Arafat's health collapsed, Sharon has been facing a growing domestic and international pressure to reconsider. Politicians from both right and left call on him to deal with a new "partner" rather than go it alone. Their motives are obviously different: Yossi Beilin, the left-wing leader, wants to negotiate a deeper withdrawal, while Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu calls for putting the Gaza evacuation on hold and renegotiating from scratch.

Abbas will demand a clear linkage with the next step: a deep withdrawal from the West Bank and discussion of final-status issues like Jerusalem and refugees.

Sharon sticks to his plan, arguing that any change on the other side is yet to be seen. In his eyes, Israel still has no partner and it cannot negotiate until the Palestinians have curbed terrorism and incitement and undergone reforms mandated by the road map. This position may buy Sharon some time, but soon he will be asked to facilitate the rule of Arafat's heirs with gestures, from lifting travel restrictions in Palestinian areas to releasing prisoners and allowing new Palestinian elections. Last year, Sharon's stinginess contributed to Abbas' downfall as the Palestinian Authority premier. Now, Israeli officials are begging Sharon to not repeat his mistake, but rather to help the moderates take power.

Next, there will be calls to coordinate the Gaza withdrawal with the Palestinians. Sharon knows that giving the Gaza settlements to a credible partner could save Israel from a lot of trouble. Evacuation under fire will result in mutual bloodshed. But Abbas, and any other Palestinian leader, will not be satisfied with just Gaza, and will demand a clear linkage with the next step: a deep West Bank withdrawal and discussion of final-status issues like Jerusalem and refugees, which Sharon has tried to avoid. Because he gave away Gaza for free, Sharon would have to start negotiating about the West Bank settlements.

Here lies Sharon's main problem: He would like to stop the process after a modest disengagement. Having created the courageous precedent of settlement removal, Sharon prefers to leave the more sensitive stages to his successors. But with Arafat gone, he now needs to adopt himself to the new reality. Pinning his hope on Bush, Sharon wishes that the president will not sell him out to America's European and Arab friends, who demand a swift progress from Gaza to the West Bank and Jerusalem in return for mending their Iraq-stained relations with America.

In his first term, Bush went further than his predecessors in committing the United States to an independent Palestine. Learning the lesson of Bill Clinton's failure to achieve peace, Bush placed performance benchmarks on both sides, calling on the Palestinians to stop terrorism and get their governance act together, and imposing a settlement freeze on Israel. Bush's weakness was in his lack of stamina when his efforts were stalled by the parties. To the Palestinians' chagrin, Bush gave Sharon a free hand to crush the intifada, even if he forbade Israel from hurting Arafat or building its barrier deep inside the West Bank. In retrospect, Bush fulfilled his overriding interest, preventing the "spillover" of the Israeli-Palestinian war to neighboring countries, risking U.S. regional interests.

In the past year, Bush has lent strong support to Sharon's disengagement plan. But since his re-election, and more so following Arafat's demise, Bush is under growing pressure to move faster on the road map. Apparently he will try to use the next few months as a buffer period, waiting for Sharon to complete his withdrawal while assisting the Abbas takeover of the Palestinians, through elections and other means. Washington will not overload Sharon,

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who struggles to survive politically and implement his current plan, with calls for additional settlement removals.

Only after Gaza is evacuated and the new Palestinian partner emerges will the time for the hard decisions about the next stage and the final status come. In the meantime, Israeli officials say that any show of the Palestinians' ability to get their act together, especially on security, will be immediately rewarded with reciprocal measures. Israelis recognize that a new era has begun, but they prefer to take it step by step, rather than in grand gestures. ■

ALUF BENN *is the diplomatic editor of the Israeli daily* Ha'aretz.

Clothes Call

At midnight on December 31, WTO rules regulating the international trade in apparel are set to expire. If you think China is dominant now ...

BY AYELISH McGARVEY

AT MIDNIGHT ON DECEMBER 31, AMERicans will toast the new year with a drunken round of "Auld Lang Syne." On the other side of the globe, China will be celebrating by opening new factories—more than 3,000 new textile and apparel factories that will begin their work as decade-old quotas are lifted on China's access to the lucrative American marketplace. Thousands of Chinese workers will file into position and fire up brand-new spinning, weaving, and sewing machines. Within hours, blouses, pants, towels, and bedding will be ready for shipment to U.S. stores like Wal-Mart and Target.

Though it's music to the ears of the Chinese government, the din of the new mills could be a death knell for beleaguered manufacturers in the United States and other foreign markets. According to rules set when creating the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1993, quotas limiting foreign-manufactured textiles and apparel from entering the United States will disappear starting in 2005. Then the market will become a free-for-all, one in which China is set to dominate. The only power to stop this lies with the Bush administration, whose decision is very much up for grabs. Unless trade advocates can persuade George W. Bush to extend the quotas, 2005 will mark the beginning of the end for textiles in places like Turkey, Bangladesh, Mexico—and the United States.

On November 3, the U.S. government accepted for consideration five separate petitions for China safeguards, the Bush administration's only tool for extending the quotas, on some of the most lucrative products still restricted by quotas, including non-cotton shirts and trousers. These came from the American Manufacturing Trade Action Coalition (AMTAC) in Washington, five other U.S. apparel-, textile-, and fiber-producing trade associations, and the labor union UNITE HERE in an effort to stall China's takeover of the global apparel market and give lawmakers time to lobby the WTO for a permanent solution. The Bush administration has 90 days to decide whether to enact the safeguards—and, in so doing, draw the ire of Chinese manufacturers.

Countries around the world have joined the call for safeguard quotas. The stakes are high: Once quotas are lifted, China will take over $220 billion in world garment trade—one of the biggest short-term transfers of wealth ever. If China captures its anticipated new market share—including an estimated 50 percent of the U.S. market—30 million textile- and apparel-manufacturing jobs will disappear worldwide, including an estimated 650,000 in the United States. To date, 52 countries, including Turkey and Mexico, have signed on to the Istanbul Declaration, which calls for governments worldwide to pressure the WTO to convene an emergency meeting on the issue.

The quotas date back 30 years. Under a 1974 global agreement called the Multi-Fiber Arrangement (MFA), 47 nations receive a share of the European and U.S. markets for apparel and textiles. Though the MFA's original intent was to protect declining textile industries in the United States and Europe, it also encouraged less-developed nations like Sri Lanka—suddenly guaranteed a market—to grow their textile capacities. (Apparel is a low-capital, high-labor industry, which makes it a good fit for the cheaper labor so abundant in developing countries.) These efforts were largely successful, resulting in millions of new jobs in countries desperate for the stability a manufacturing sector brings. Smaller nations like Cambodia and Bangladesh even began to grow a modest middle class. At the time, China's was a closed communist system, and no one anticipated the economic reforms of the last 15 years.

Then, as part of the 1993 deal that created the WTO, the United States and Europe each agreed to a 10-year phase-out of MFA quotas on clothing and textiles beginning in 1995. The idea was to help developing countries that 20 years earlier had been boosted by the quota system but that had long since complained that those quotas were impeding their development. At the same time, the World Bank estimated that the quota system, by limiting market access, deprived poorer nations of twice what they received in foreign aid. The Americans and Europeans were not happy about the decision, but conceded in exchange for new international rules protecting intellectual property and loosened investment requirements. Even then, China was not a party to international trade rules, and most manufacturers did not perceive it as an imminent threat to the global apparel market. This turned out to be a miscalculation of Herculean proportion.

In 2001, China officially entered the world market when it joined the WTO, which for the first time allowed the Chinese to trade in the richest market in the world, the United States. Competitors in Europe and the United States were blindsided. Just four years later, China is the world's largest exporter of apparel and now employs 6.8 million

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workers in its textile factories. According to the National Council of Textile Organizations, China's share of the U.S. apparel market in 29 quota-free categories rocketed from 10 percent in 2001 to a remarkable 72 percent as of June 2004. (It is projected that that number will reach 80 percent by January.) The WTO estimates that when quotas are lifted in January, China will control 50 percent of all textiles and clothing imported to the United States.

China's meteoric success is due partly to low labor costs, but also to its ability to keep its manufacturing flexible, fast, and efficient—key elements to maintaining competitive advantage in an era of low-inventory, big-box retail stores. But the real difference, critics charge, is China's unfair and anti-competitive practices, which violate WTO regulations and make competition nearly impossible. For instance, China pegs the yuan to the dollar at a fixed rate and strictly regulates imports and the allocation of foreign exchange. (This gives China a 30-percent to 40-percent price advantage in the U.S. market.) According to the safeguard petitions filed by U.S. trade advocates, the Chinese government subsidizes the production of textiles, and state-owned textile companies account for nearly 12 percent of all factories. (More than a third of those are reportedly producing at a loss.) The petitions also describe the proliferation in China of nonperforming loans (loans that never need to be paid back) and hefty government subsidies for startup textile manufacturers.

Trade advocates also contend that the Chinese government turns a blind eye to manufacturers that break trade laws to maximize profits. These include transshipment regulations (China gets around its quotas in part by shipping its goods through other countries) and content labeling (allowing China to use cheaper materials on the sly). Additionally, China keeps its labor costs low, in part by restricting workplace organizing and disregarding workers' rights. After the quotas are lifted in 2005, it will become clear that even the cheapest labor and most streamlined production in Bangladesh cannot compete with a stacked deck in China.

As part of the deal Beijing made with Washington in the late 1990s that enabled China to join the WTO, the United States has the right to impose selective "safeguards"—effectively, new quotas—on textiles and apparel imports from China if the U.S. government can prove they are disrupting the U.S. market. These trade restraints are limited to one year, and can be renewed annually until 2008 if Washington can prove continued disruption. These are the safeguards that WTO member states and U.S. manufacturers are now pressuring the United States to invoke.

Free-trade advocates oppose the safeguards and maintain that China will eventually comply with WTO regulations as it "grows into" its role as a global manufacturing power, and they argue that U.S. access to cheaper goods is a benefit that far outweighs the cost of short-term job loss. The big-box retail lobby is a powerful one in Washington; Wal-Mart's Pac for Responsible Government gave $700,000 in contributions during the last election cycle—mainly to Republican candidates. These lobbyists are urging the Bush administration to allow the quota expiration to proceed as planned. As far as they are concerned, the lower the price, the wider the profit margins.

What's interesting is that the Bush administration may not be all ears to corporate interests this time around. U.S. consumers pay a dramatic hidden cost when we stuff the market full of cheap imported goods. When a factory closes up shop and moves overseas, there are the obvious costs in terms of jobs, wages, and health and pension benefits for workers. But the community also loses a major contributor to the tax base, which means that the local government increases property taxes, even though property values may be stagnant or even declining. When this happens, the state has difficulty balancing its budget, and subsequently raises tuition at public universities, for example, to cut costs. Administration trade officials are all too familiar with this scenario, which has played out particularly in southern and Rust Belt states, and they will likely push to protect U.S. jobs.

What's more, the administration may also worry that if the quota is lifted, China could indirectly threaten America's national security. The fear is that as China takes more market shares, the economies of developing countries that benefited from the quotas will falter—and suffering populations will take it out on the United States. In Turkey, for example, the textile and apparel sector constitutes one-third of the nation's industrial employment, and nearly $30 billion in export earnings each year—the single greatest industrial component of that country's economy. Turkey is the model nation for what Bush hopes to accomplish in Iraq: an Islamic nation governed by a secular democratic system, its economy hovering in the purgatory that exists between industrialized and developing countries.

China's monopolizing of the world market in record speed will effectively yank the textile industry out of Turkey, explains AMTAC Director Augustine Tantillo. "Pull those 4 million jobs out of Turkey, and the huge export earnings as well. The Turkish economy destabilizes, and the nation experiences political unrest. ... What in the world are we thinking?" he nearly shouts into the phone during an interview. "Are we going to willingly create a breeding ground for terrorists who prey on hopelessness and unrest?"

U.S. concern on this front mainly focuses on Indonesia, the Philippines, the Asian subcontinent, and the Middle East. According to Tantillo, the Bush administration is concerned enough that it has asked security officials to review the China safeguard petition. Still, at the end of the day, it may be China itself that exerts the most influence over the Bush administration's decision on the textile safeguards. If Washington moves to maintain quotas on Chinese textiles, Beijing will undoubtedly react swiftly with a retributive tit for tat in another market, perhaps wheat or cotton, areas in which the United States is dependent on foreign, specifically Chinese, markets for export.

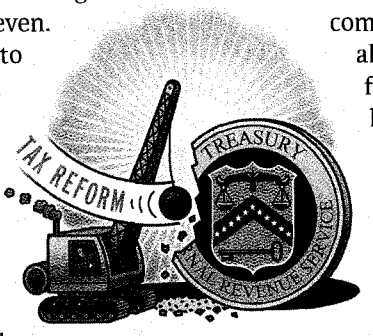
Even if the administration invokes the safeguards, these late-game efforts are largely beside the point: By 2008, the crisis will revive unless cool heads can devise a longer-term solution that balances the interests of smaller countries against those of global superpowers. "And that is a very significant challenge on our part," sighs Tantillo. ■

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Tax Missimplification: It's Not a Done Deal

BY ROBERT S. McINTYRE

Two days after his re-election, President Bush offered the public some guidance on what he says will be a central goal of his second term: "tax simplification." Bush said he wants to "encourage people to invest and save," i.e., he favors still more tax cuts for the rich. He added that he'll propose a tax code that "rewards risk," i.e., one that offers even more tax breaks to business. No surprises there. But as previously hinted, this time around Bush offered a twist: His plan will be "revenue neutral." Of course, that requires raising taxes—by a lot—on everyone else to break even.



The two leading right-wing proposals to replace the progressive income tax are a flat-rate wage tax and a high-rate national sales tax. Either would increase taxes on most Americans by thousands of dollars a year. That's not something that you'd think would be popular. In fact, while Bush only touched on these ideas during his campaign, the national-sales-tax scheme was put to the electoral test in several House and Senate races. It didn't do well.

In Georgia, for example, Republican House incumbent Max Burns lost a race that featured ads criticizing him for supporting a national sales tax. In South Carolina, Democrat Inez Tenenbaum came from far behind to almost catch Republican Jim DeMint in a race for an open Senate seat, entirely due to her attacks on the sales-tax plan DeMint had introduced in Congress. Defenseless, DeMint began claiming he didn't support his own bill (and resorted to gay bashing to win). Seven-term North Carolina Republican Representative Charles Taylor survived a scare only after he, too, denied that he supported his own sales-tax bill. In Colorado, Democrat Ken Salazar beat beer baron Pete Coors for an open Senate seat after condemning Coors' "crazy" sales-tax idea. Likewise, the flat-rate wage tax was an issue in a number of races a few years ago, and it also flopped badly.

An additional complication for the president and for tax-deform backers is the bitter war on the right between flat taxers and sales taxers. Sales taxers generally hate the flat tax because it doesn't "abolish the IRS," by which they mean rename it. Flat taxers like Grover Norquist detest the sales tax (and its cousin, the more easily administered value-added tax) because they think a sales tax would be too easy to increase—and might lead to reduced deficits or (gasp!) more government programs.

So here's my fearless prediction: Bush will appoint his "bipartisan commission" (say, nine Republicans and Zell Miller), staff it with people from The Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute, and tell it exactly what kinds of options he wants it to propose. In due course, the commission will return with its list of options, all of them variants on a flat wage tax and a flat sales tax. And once these plans get analyzed in the press, the administration will lose its enthusiasm.

Which is not to say that we fair-tax advocates should sit on our hands and just watch the fun. First of all, tax deformers may try to fool the public. One ploy might be to suppress information. Heritage has already taken a preemptive step in this direction by decrying all "distributional tables" as inherently misleading. Or perhaps Bush will propose a combination wage tax and sales tax, but publish tables showing only the tax-cutting effects of the first. Congress' formerly nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation took this tack in its analysis of Bush's 2001 tax reductions; its tables simply left out the "uncertain" effects of estate-tax repeal, even though everyone knows that the estate tax hits only the very largest fortunes. Our side needs to be prepared to expose and rebut these kinds of shenanigans.

We should also present our own tax-reform ideas. Tax simplification should mean closing loopholes and taxing people and corporations on what they really make, not on some figment of their accountants' imaginations. Graduated rates aren't complicated, but are essential to protect the poor and middle class and ensure that top earners pay a decent share to support the country that makes their prosperity possible. A true tax-reform plan would no doubt be noxious to Bush and his loophole-loving allies in Congress. But it would resonate with the public, and could help set the stage for new leaders in Washington who'd deliver the kind of tax simplification that most Americans want and deserve. ■

PETER HOEY

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What's Next?

The mourning period is over. Now, four simple guidelines for becoming a majority party.

BY ALAN BRINKLEY ILLUSTRATION BY DEVON BOWMAN

THIS TIME THERE ARE NO EXCUSES—NO THWARTED POPULAR majority, no fatal butterfly ballots or hanging chads, no renegade Supreme Court decision, no Nader factor. This was a defeat, pure and simple—not a landslide, not an unambiguous mandate for the policies of the Bush administration, but unmistakably a defeat. So where do Democrats, and liberal-progressive Democrats in particular, go from here?

It will be tempting, as it always is, to blame the candidate and the campaign. John Kerry was never anyone's idea of a perfect candidate. Yet he helped unite Democrats in a way they have not been united in a generation, raised more money than any Democrat has ever raised, campaigned with extraordinary energy and commitment, bested the president in three debates, attacked the policies of the administration sharply and forthrightly, mobilized the party's base successfully, and received 4 million more votes than Al Gore did in 2000. Perhaps a candidate with greater political skills might have done better, but no such candidate was clearly visible in this race. Democrats would be making a serious mistake if they concluded that their only problem, or even their principal problem, was their choice of a candidate.

And in any event, the presidency is not the most difficult challenge. True, Republicans have won five of the last seven presidential elections. But think how little it would have taken for that figure to be three out of seven (if Gore had won in 2000—as many believe he actually did—and had won reelection in 2004 with the same post–September 11 strength from which George W. Bush profited). The average popular vote of the seven winners since 1980—even including Ronald Reagan's 59-percent landslide in 1984—is a little more than 50 percent. A few hundred thousand votes difference in Ohio this year would have given Kerry a victory (albeit one in which he, like Bush in 2000, would have lost the popular vote). So it's not hard to imagine centrist Democrats winning presidential elections in the future, even in four years, if the Republicans are unsuccessful or unlucky or both.

The greater challenge is to reverse the erosion of Democratic strength in Congress. This will be particularly difficult in the Senate. More than half the states are securely Republican, many of them small in population, collectively without enough electoral votes to produce a Republican presidential victory but all of them, of course, with two Senate seats. Democrats do control some Senate seats in the red states, just as Republicans control some in the blue ones. But Republicans have steadily increased their control over southern and western Senate seats, leaving the Democrats with a substantial structural disadvantage. Republican control of so many states also means that when congressional districts are reconfigured, Democrats will find themselves further disadvantaged—as they were this year in Texas after the Tom DeLay–driven, off-cycle reapportionment. If the most Democrats can hope for is an occasional Democratic president facing a consistently conservative Republican Congress, the future of progressive or liberal hopes is grim, indeed.

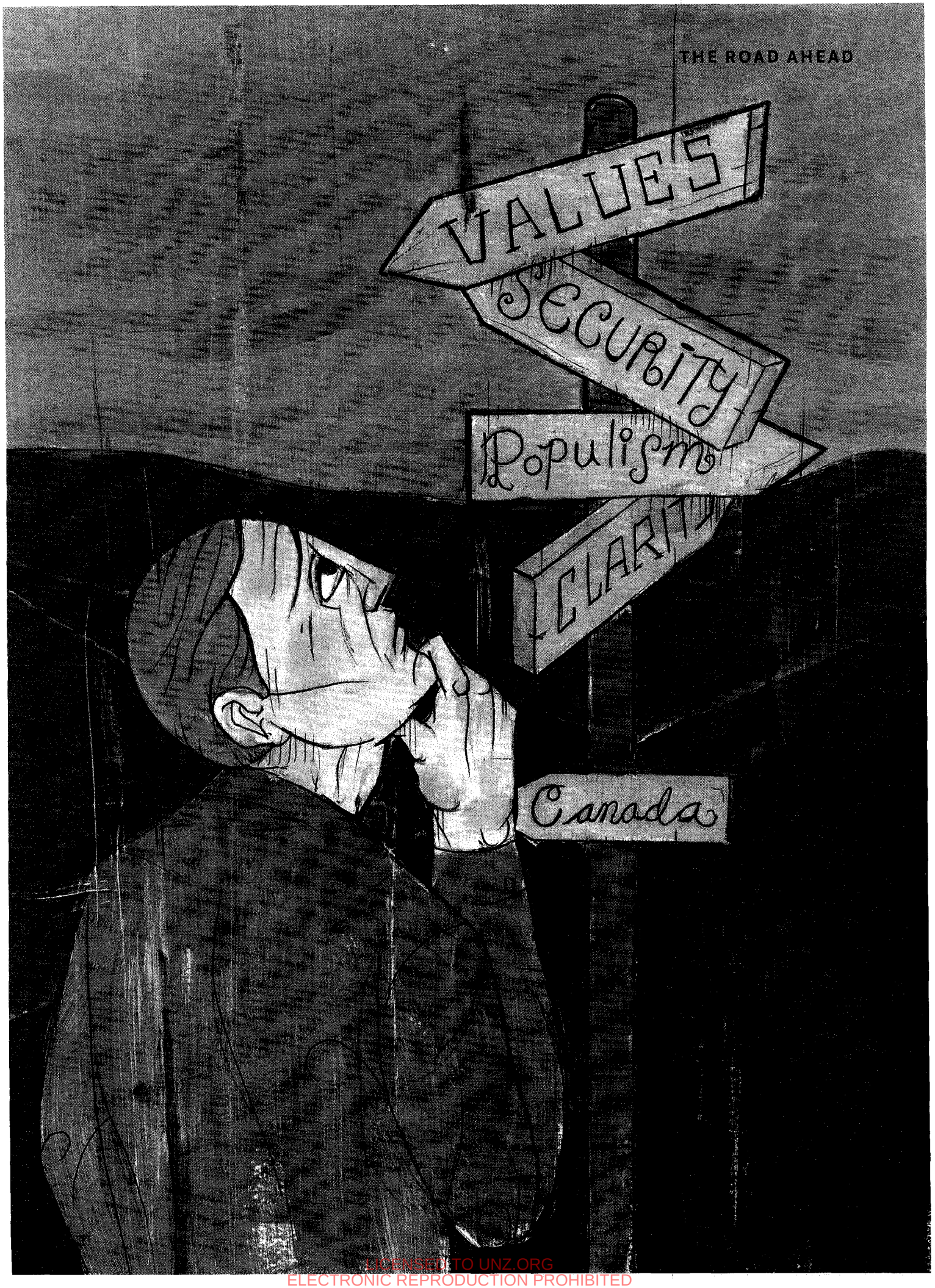
The most sobering fact about the 2004 election is that Democrats did not profit from the significant rise in voter turnout. It has long been an article of faith among Democrats that increasing the turnout would help their candidate. But that was not the case this year. Bush drew 9 million more voters than he received in 2000, an 18-percent increase, far overshadowing Kerry's 8-percent increase over Gore. That same increase in Republican turnout contributed to the party's larger-than-expected gains in Congress. Even among first-time voters, expected to be a major source of Democratic strength, Kerry won only a modest majority. It's hard to imagine voter turnout growing much above the 59 percent we saw this year. Mobilizing the base did not produce victory. So for Democrats, the only real option now is to expand their base, in part by converting Republican voters into Democratic ones.

This is precisely the reverse of the task the right faced in 1964, in the aftermath of Barry Goldwater's overwhelming defeat and the rout of Republicans in Congress. For the Democrats to rebuild as the Republicans once did will require the same things that helped launch the rise of the right 40 years ago: commitment, imagination, hard work, and confidence in the importance of their task. Progressive forces have much less ground to make up than conservatives did when they began. But they cannot expect to make up that ground simply by waiting for the Republicans to fail, or for demographic trends to change the electorate in their favor, or for a charismatic candidate to emerge. They should, rather, try to emulate, at least in some ways, the great success of the right in turning itself from a frail "remnant" (as some conservatives liked to call themselves in the 1950s) into a mighty force that now dominates American politics.

BUILD AN INFRASTRUCTURE

The rise of the right began not so much with ideas or candidates or popular support as with infrastructure. Within months of the 1964 election, work was already under way.

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Richard Viguerie began constructing a vast mailing list of conservative donors from a list of 12,000 Goldwater contributors and expanded from there to more than 4 million contributors and 15 million names by the mid-1970s. Conservative campaigns had for many years been less well-funded and less well-organized than those of their rivals. In most recent elections, they have been better funded and better organized.

The right has constructed an intellectual infrastructure as well. It has created think tanks—The Heritage Foundation; the Hoover Institution; the Cato, Hudson, Manhattan, and American Enterprise institutes; and many others—that over time became well-endowed with money, strategies, and tactics for the war of ideas. The Federalist Society has spent years grooming aspiring lawyers to become judges. Conservatives have created their own media—not just the small political magazines that both the left and the right have had for years but talk radio and FOX News and the large networks of evangelical cable and radio stations. The right has produced a stable of conservative journalists and pundits, who increasingly dominate political talk shows. This infrastructure operates with remarkable coordination and discipline. Those who have attended Grover Norquist's weekly breakfasts, which fill a large hotel ballroom in Washington, have been struck by how effective the meetings are in shaping a message that many very different groups then consistently deliver.

That infrastructure has now spread into Congress. Beginning in 1993, congressional Republicans became united in their effort to ensure the failure of the Clinton presidency. There was not a single Republican vote for Bill Clinton's tax increase that year. The filibuster, a tactic party leaders had seldom used in the past, became a routine tool of derailing any legislation Republicans did not like. The impeachment drive in 1998–99 was almost wholly partisan. Virtually no Democrats supported it. Republicans have abandoned bipartisanship as either a goal or a value. This exceptional party unity has essentially removed the Senate and the House as the checks and balances the Constitution envisioned—except to the degree that the Democratic minority can at times derail conservative efforts. Years of Republican judicial appointments have made a large proportion of the federal judiciary reliable partners of the right as well.

And conservatives have been astoundingly effective in recent years in the mechanics of turning out their voters. They have mobilized churches and community centers and retirement homes and other institutions through which friends and neighbors bring other friends and neighbors to the polls—as opposed to, say, anonymous college students calling Democratic voters and offering them a ride. Democrats bring voters to the polls by the carful, Republicans by the busload.

Progressives used to have an infrastructure, too: urban machines, labor unions, networks of intellectuals and university professors who provided a reliable source of ideas. But urban machines have disappeared, labor unions have declined, and the number of professors and intellectuals available for political duty has dwindled.

Liberals need to build a new infrastructure. They have already made a start. This magazine, founded 15 years ago to bring the world of ideas into progressive public discourse in much the same way that *The Public Interest* had done for the right, is one example of that effort. There are new progressive think tanks (John Podesta's Center for American Progress, for example) and older progressive foundations that have become more energized (such as The Century Foundation, whose board, I should disclose, I chair). Political organizations committed to Democratic and progressive goals have become significant forces in campaigns and elsewhere: MoveOn.org, which helped mobilize hundreds of thousands of people to increase turnout on election day; NARAL Pro-Choice America, which has helped make women's choice a winning issue in much of the country; the American Constitution Society, formed to offer an alternative to the Federalist Society; and others. Democrats, largely thanks to Howard Dean, learned to use the Internet earlier and more effectively than the Republicans. And Air America has begun to offer a challenge to right-wing radio.

But progressives still have a long way to go to catch up in the number, size, and resources of their institutions. Building such institutions is an essential part of the task of revival. Without them, the Democrats will remain at a significant disadvantage.

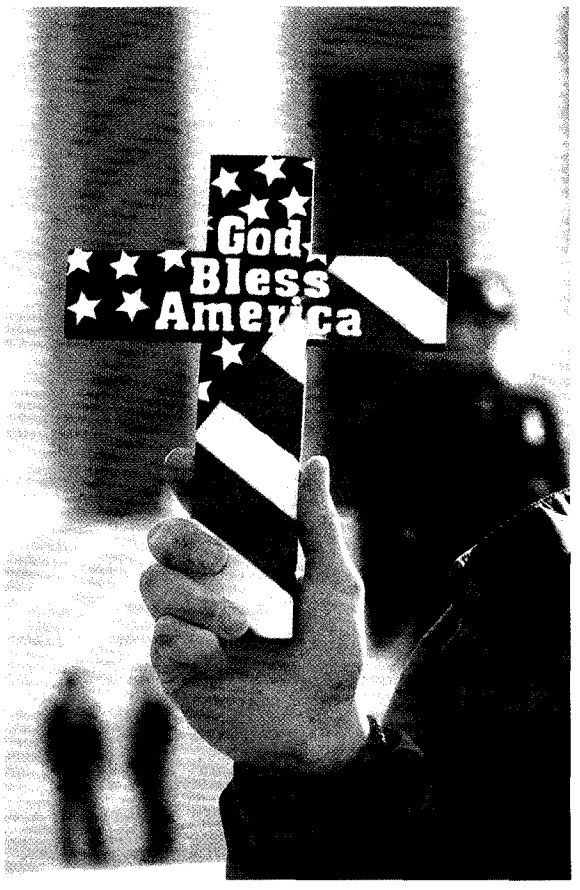
RECONNECT WITH WORKING PEOPLE

The greatest success of the modern right has been transforming conservatism into a populist phenomenon, drawing heavily from the lower middle class, the working class, and, perhaps above all, the once-Democratic South. The greatest dilemma Democrats face is how to win a significant number of those voters back. To do so, Democrats need to turn much of their attention away from culture and back toward class.

That was Franklin Delano Roosevelt's triumphant strategy in the 1930s, much aided, of course, by the Great Depression. In the 1920s, the Democratic Party had torn itself apart debating cultural issues that divided its diverse constituencies. Battles over prohibition, immigration, the Ku Klux Klan, and other explosive questions paralyzed the party (producing the famous deadlock at the 1924 Democratic convention, in which it took 103 ballots to produce a candidate with no hope of winning). But even before the Depression began, Roosevelt was thinking about how to escape these divisive issues and turn the party to questions that would cross regional and cultural boundaries. Roosevelt won two landslide victories—with huge Democratic majorities in Congress—by talking not about culture but about class. The New Deal coalition was united by shared economic interests, shared suspicion of corporate power, and shared commitment to aggressive government efforts to improve the lives of ordinary people. At times, Roosevelt used a language of class conflict in a manner almost without precedent in the history of the presidency. "We have earned the hatred of entrenched greed," he said in his 1936 State of the Union address. "They seek the restoration of their selfish power. ... Give them their way and they will take the course of every autocracy of the past—power for themselves, enslavement for the public."

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No one should wish for today's Democratic Party to adopt such language or to portray itself as the adversary of the corporate world. Nor should anyone wish for a government that ignores racial justice, as the New Deal did. That would be both bad politics and bad policy, as it was to some degree even for Roosevelt. But Democrats today need to have a clear economic message to reach those who were known in the 1930s as "the common man." Bill Clinton was most successful when he was identifying with the plight of lower-middle-class and working-class people caught in a painful economic transition. John Kerry, perhaps less credibly, tried to use those issues as well, as did Al Gore in 2000. That both men failed to win does not discredit the value of the effort; if anything, it suggests that the efforts have not been strenuous enough.



MANNIE GARCIA/GETTY IMAGES

It will not be easy to wean working-class Republicans from the cultural resentments that have displaced their economic resentments—nor, for that matter, to wean some Democrats themselves from their preoccupation with culture wars and identity politics. Both parties have been complicit in ignoring and obscuring the terrible impact on the social fabric of the growing inequality of the last 30 years. Both have paid too little attention to the erosion of the many protections that once provided a level of security for working people. The right has done so by choice, the left by inadvertence. But the past notwithstanding, there is an opportunity for Democrats and progressives to revive such issues as health care, the minimum wage, corporate malfeasance, workers' rights and workers' safety, and other areas of economic security more emphatically and successfully than they have done in recent years.

COME TO TERMS WITH "MORAL VALUES" AND RELIGIOUS FAITH

Re-engaging with issues of class and power is a risky strategy. It's certain to evoke accusations of "class warfare" and "demagoguery" from the right, and from some centrist Democrats. It's also unlikely by itself to reverse the party's fortunes unless progressives can come to terms with cultural issues.

How should progressives respond when they discover that many, perhaps most, Americans strongly oppose some of the values in which they deeply believe? How should they answer those, even within their own ranks, who claim that it is a grave political error to support the rights of gays and lesbians, protect women's access to legal abortion, believe in the immorality of the death penalty, oppose the unregulated sale of weapons, resist the intrusion of religion into politics and government, and defend affirmative action? There may be room for pragmatic compromise on some of these issues, but only up to a point. To jettison deep commitments for political advantage is an unworthy way to gain office. The Democratic Party paid a huge political price in the 1960s and '70s for supporting the civil-rights movement, a price it is still paying. But no one, I hope, would argue that Democrats should not have done so.

I would like to think, however, that the power of "moral values" is not permanently wedded to a single set of issues and prejudices; that it is, rather, closely connected with a perception of principled conviction and commitment. President Bush gained many votes on the margins from outlawing late-term abortions, lobbying for a constitutional prohibition against gay marriage, and calling for "faith-based initiatives." But I suspect he gained many more votes by conveying an image of certitude and self-assurance rooted in moral and spiritual values. Kerry recognized this as a problem for Democrats early in his campaign and began talking extensively, if not often convincingly, about "values." His mistake was not in raising the issue but in failing to define his own relationship to it. Indeed, one of his greatest weaknesses in the campaign was his image as a man without deep conviction, a "flip-flopper." This hurt him not only among people who said they cared about "moral values" but among those who were principally concerned with fighting terrorism, who also voted overwhelmingly for Bush. Kerry and the Democrats seemed to such voters to lack the courage and moral fiber desired in a leader.

Many have argued that Bush's advantage on this issue can be explained in large part by his open identification with Christian faith. More than any previous president, Bush has been exceedingly open about his religiosity and has shown no reluctance to invoke his own evangelical beliefs, and his claim of a personal rebirth in faith, in explaining himself to the nation. Kerry is an active Catholic who reportedly wears a crucifix and regularly attends Mass, but he lost the Catholic vote and seemed to many Americans to be without religious affiliation of any kind.

Twenty-three percent of voters this year identified themselves as white evangelical or born-again Christians. Seventy-eight percent of those voted for Bush. White evangelicals have been voting Republican for years. Nevertheless, many

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progressives have been especially alarmed by the growing size and activism of this group in the electorate, and by what they fear is the close-minded anti-intellectualism it represents. It is not comforting to think of voters making decisions in response to what they consider commands from the Bible or direct instructions from God, and it is undoubtedly the case that a significant group of Christians does just that. But most evangelicals are not so dogmatic. They find in their faith not just a set of beliefs but a source of personal stability and safety. Their attraction to Bush is, I suspect, as much a result of his image of certitude as it is of his religious beliefs.

Whatever role religion may have played in the 2004 religion, there is no compelling reason to believe that deep and public faith is a necessary ingredient of political success. Reagan's enormous, if erratic, popularity owed little to his faint public religiosity and much to the widespread belief that he was a strong, principled leader with deep convictions. FDR, as beloved and admired a president among ordinary Americans as we have had in our history, won the loyalty of his following with an image of strength and commitment largely unconnected to faith. The claim that Democrats cannot hope to revive without identifying more closely with Christianity is not supported even by our relatively recent history. There are important moral values that exist independent of religion; sources of commitment other than spiritual; personal strength not derived from faith.

But this does not mean that progressives should shun religion, either. Just as there are sources of conservative conviction in religion, so are there sources of progressive commitment to helping the poor, protecting the earth, working for peace. There is no reason not to recognize and respect them. Nor should progressive politicians who have a grounding in faith hide it from voters. The separation of church and state is a profoundly important principle of American government, a principle that the Bush administration has often sought to undermine. But protecting that separation does not require that religion be hidden from view and banished from public discourse. Least of all does it suggest that progressives should look with fear, mistrust, or scorn on the millions of Americans to whom religious faith is a fundamental part of self-identification. Clinton was entirely comfortable in religious settings—not just black churches, where he was famously beloved, but also in the enormous white Pentecostal churches of the South, where he was a frequent visitor. It would be hard to imagine Kerry fitting comfortably into such settings, but that does not mean future candidates could not do better.

Protecting the separation of church and state need not suggest that progressives should look with fear, mistrust, or scorn on the millions of religious Americans.

MAKE PEACE WITH THE MILITARY—AND THE SOUTH

To many Americans, and to even more people around the world, the most dangerous and frightening aspect of the Bush administration has been its handling of the nation's response to terrorism and its international relations more generally. The abrogation of international agreements, the contempt for international organizations, and the brusque dismissal of allies all preceded September 11. We now know that plans for an invasion of Iraq did as well. The war on terrorism has been handled with a striking incompetence that has alarmed no one more than those most deeply committed to it. The war in Iraq, reviled by many Americans and most of the world even before it began, has proceeded with, if anything, even greater incompetence than the war on terrorism. Of all the areas in which Bush seemed most vulnerable, this surely was one of the greatest. Of all the issues that led progressives to wonder how Bush could possibly win, this was probably the most powerful.

Kerry's response to Bush on issues of foreign policy was sensible and, to most progressives, reasonably persuasive. Americans were misled into the war in Iraq. The war is a disastrous stalemate. Our alliances are in tatters. And the war on terrorism remains largely unfought. A Democratic administration would work to disengage responsibly from Iraq, re-engage allies, and fight the war on terrorism in a more serious way. Why did this argument have so little traction with voters?

The Bush administration was perhaps more clever than we realized. A fight against terrorist groups—a difficult, shadowy, complicated effort with few assurances of success—would have no public face capable of providing a political advantage. Overthrowing a state is something the U.S. military knows how to do and something that fits more comfortably in most people's image of war. The war in Iraq has not proceeded well, to put it mildly; but it nevertheless gave some credibility to the administration's effort to portray itself as having the strength and resolve necessary for leadership in a dangerous world. Bush's flyboy appearance on the deck of an aircraft carrier to celebrate a "mission accomplished" was widely and justly ridiculed, but the image of a virile warrior in the end probably outweighed the irony of his false claims of success.

Not since John F. Kennedy have the Democrats been able to produce a plausible military leader. Jimmy Carter was a graduate of the Naval Academy, but he appeared hapless and ineffectual when confronted with a military challenge (most notably through the failed helicopter raid to rescue the Iranian hostages in 1980). Clinton waged a series of successful military campaigns without ever overcoming the image pinned on him in 1992 as a draft evader. Gore and Kerry, both Vietnam veterans, failed to compete as military leaders with a man who had chosen not to serve in Vietnam and had not even fulfilled his minimal obligations as a specially privileged member of the Texas National Guard. It is ironic, perhaps, that the most plausible military leader of the

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two decades before Bush's presidency was Reagan, who also missed his generation's war but who knew how to act like a man who understood battle.

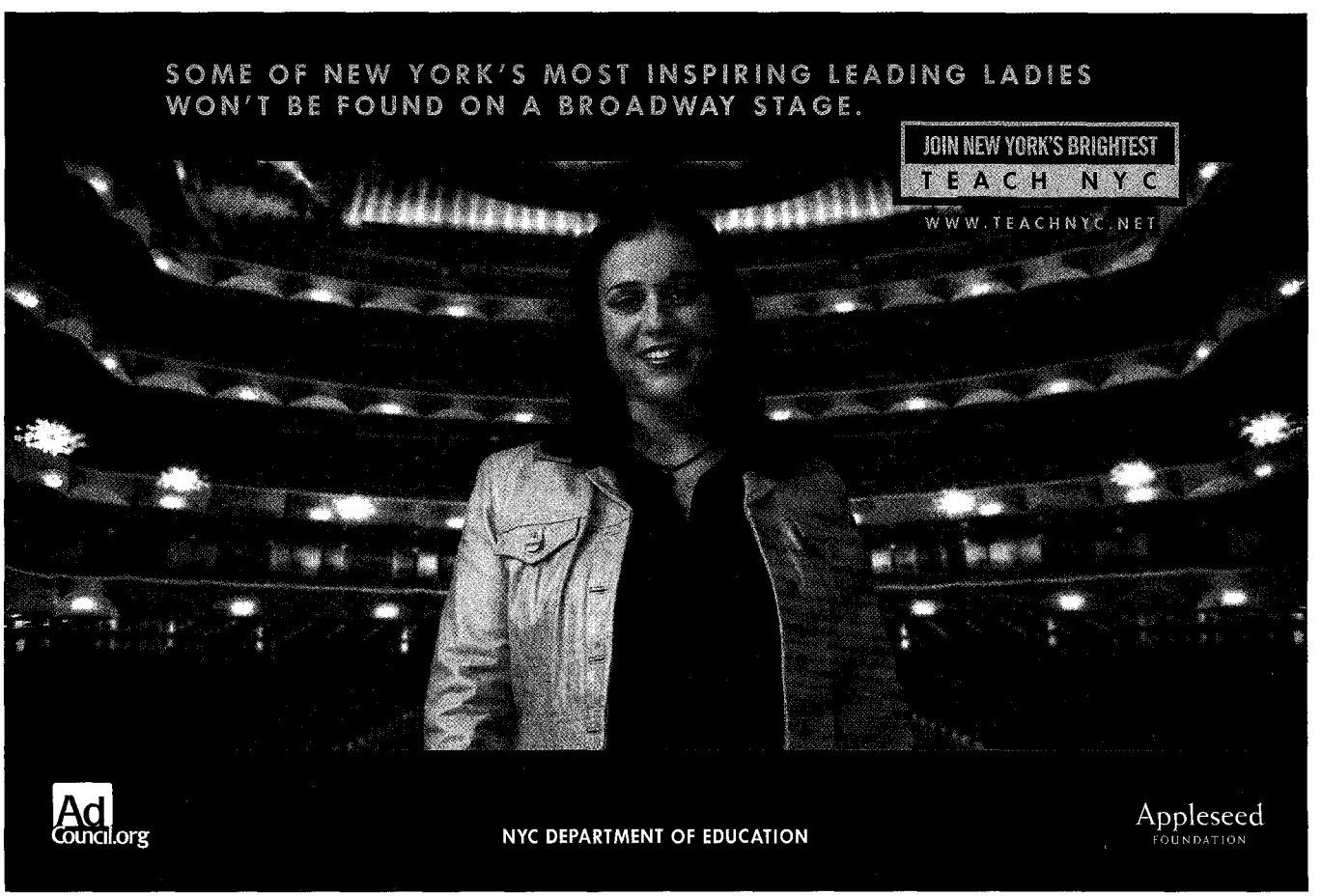
Unspoken but clearly felt in the comparisons between Democrats and Republicans in recent decades has been a particular conception of masculinity and patriotism. Kerry's impressive war record wilted quickly in the face of withering attacks from the Swift-boat avengers, but also in the face of the self-confident, masculine swagger that seems to be a natural part of the president's demeanor. Clearing brush in Crawford beats windsurfing in Nantucket any day. A key to Bush's victory is that he outpolled Kerry by 11 percent among men (and by a higher percentage than that among white men), while losing by a small margin among women.

Democrats have also had difficulty identifying with patriotism. Despite decades of efforts to flood the party's conventions with flags and patriotic music, Democrats are still associated in many minds with the anti-war movement and the other protests of the 1960s, and of course they now lead the anti-war movement of the early 21st century. Progressives rightly argue that opposing a mistaken and disastrous war is itself a patriotic act. But they must find a better way to have both a responsible foreign and military policy and a comfortable relationship with military culture and national pride.

This is a particular problem in the region with which Democrats most urgently need to reconnect: the American South. It is the area of the United States in which the military is most visible and revered; in which the culture of masculinity is perhaps the strongest; in which a nationalistic patriotism is especially powerful. Bush has a terrible record of support for U.S. military forces, but he is wholly at ease on military bases—just as he is at ease at NASCAR races, football games, and other masculine activities. Democrats need to find a way to reconnect with that world, not by catering to its prejudices but by learning to respect its public culture and to demonstrate comfort with it.

The rebuilding of the Democratic Party, and of a progressive coalition capable of supporting and guiding it, will be the work of years, perhaps even decades. There will be victories along the way, to be sure, and many opportunities for progress. But reconstructing a majority coalition capable of dominating the future in the way the old New Deal coalition dominated the past will be no easy task. It took conservatives a generation to rise from the rubble of 1964 into their present commanding position, and even now their grip on power is not entirely secure. Democrats cannot assume that they will rebuild themselves any more quickly. But the task is far from hopeless. In the meantime, there is the challenge of opposition—the task of keeping alive an alternative vision of what America is and can be; of fighting honorably but doggedly against the most dangerous goals of the right; and of never, never giving up. ■

ALAN BRINKLEY *is provost and Allan Nevins Professor of History at Columbia University.*



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Opportunity Knocks

It may look grim now, but the Republicans' hubris and incompetence will ultimately prove their undoing.

BY ARTHUR SCHLESINGER JR.

ALAN BRINKLEY'S ILLUMINATING PIECE IS RIGHT IN CONcluding that the "only real option" for Democrats is to convert Republicans (and, presumably, independent voters) into Democrats. He sees years of hard labor before this can be accomplished. I am more optimistic. I think that the lethal Republican combination of hubris and incompetence will expedite matters, but only if the Democrats are prepared to step into the breach.

First, hubris. George Bush the Younger, perhaps in conscious or unconscious reaction to his father, does not dismiss "the vision thing." He believes that the Almighty summoned him to high office, and he cherishes visions. Having won the popular vote in 2004 by more than 3 million, he is exposed to the temptation of overreaching. Colin Powell, who resigned on November 15, told the *Financial Times* that foreign policy in the second term will be aggressive. Already premonitory warnings and threats against Iran are eerily reminiscent of warnings and threats that preceded the invasion of Iraq. The Bush administration's contempt for "old Europe," for the United Nations, and for international institutions is hardly concealed. The attitude is "we can do anything—all by ourselves." Hubris reaches its climax in the neoconservative fantasy that the imposition of democracy on Iraq will lead to the democratization of the world of Islam.



Battle Fatigue: Will Americans tire of Iraq?

As for incompetence, rarely have such high-flown visions been pursued with such gross negligence, mismanagement, and lack of foresight. The habits of mind of a faith-based presidency are theological and disdain practicalities. What Republicans call "values" may be popular in the Bible Belt, but they do not ensure success in Iraq. Meanwhile, blunders, misconceptions, delusions, and atrocities accumulate: the shift of priorities from Osama bin Laden to Saddam Hussein, from al-Qaeda to Iraq; no weapons of mass destruction found in Iraq; no involvement by Iraq in the attacks of September 11; meager postwar planning; American troops received, contrary to predictions, not as liberators but as occupiers; too few troops on the ground; the use of torture at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay.

The absence of accountability rewards incompetence. After Pearl Harbor, Franklin Delano Roosevelt relieved the top officers in Hawaii from their posts. After the Bay of Pigs, John F. Kennedy relieved the top CIA officials who had advocated the idiotic operation. Surely Harvard Business School taught President Bush about accountability. Any senior official tolerating torture should have been fired. Any senior official who fell for the phony intelligence conveyed by Ahmad Chalabi should have been fired. But Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, and their gang are still in power.

Bush is caught in a trap of his own construction. If we fight in Fallujah, we kill insurgents just to see young Muslims rushing to fill the breach. And if we abandon Fallujah, we cede large parts of Iraq to the insurgency. In the end we may cut and run, as we did in Vietnam about 40 years ago, but doing so would render ridiculous Bush's braggadocio about staying the course and making Iraq a democracy. The mess continues, and the mess deepens. After a time the American people, even the religious right, will tire of Iraq. I would judge this to be around the midterm elections of 2006. There is no guaranteed immunity for wartime presidents. The Korean War forced President Truman to withdraw in 1952. The Vietnam War forced President Johnson to withdraw in 1968.

The Republican combination of hubris and incompetence creates great opportunity for the Democrats. But are Democrats prepared to take advantage of the opportunity? This is where Brinkley's emphasis on infrastructure is vital. For the short run, we have a kind of built-in infrastructure ready for use: academia. The FDR and JFK administrations showed a unique interest in the systematic recruitment of academics. Perhaps a more useful model for a party out of power was the Finletter Group, set up in the 1950s to educate Adlai Stevenson and thereafter given party status as the Democratic Advisory Council by Paul Butler, the chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

In the longer run, the problem is to deal with Ronald Reagan's excommunication of affirmative government. "Government is not the solution to our problem," Reagan said in his first inaugural address. "Government is the problem." Reaganism rested on two propositions: that government was the root of evil and that, once government was "off the people's backs," the free market would solve our problems.

Now it is evident that the free market does not provide health care for millions of our people, does not ensure full employment, does not protect the natural environment, does not improve our schools, does not clean up our inner cities, and does not stop global warming. The very character of these problems calls for a larger measure of public action. This is

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the intellectual and political challenge that Democratic brain trusters must meet.

Meanwhile, voters in red states, if they think hard about it, will perhaps see the Iraq War as a more urgent threat to the republic than same-sex marriage. ■

ARTHUR SCHLESINGER JR.'s *new book is* War and the American Presidency.

Voting Alone

In red-state America, politics is much more deeply integrated into other aspects of people's daily lives.

BY LIZABETH COHEN

ALAN BRINKLEY HAS DONE AN ADMIRABLE JOB THINKING through why George W. Bush won. I particularly agree with his analysis of the damaged state of the Democratic Party's infrastructure and aim here to deepen our understanding of what needs fixing.

Let me start with myself as one type of Kerry supporter to illustrate the problem. I'm not proud of it, but my husband and I spend most of our waking hours working, leaving little time for any associational life. Free time is reserved for our two teenage children. We participate in no organized religion, belong to few organizations outside of professional ones, and barely sustain ties to the town we live in. Our political activism mostly involves writing checks to liberal groups; our community consists of friends, co-workers, and family. We are charter members of Robert Putnam's "bowling alone" crowd.

Looking back at Franklin Delano Roosevelt's landslide victory of 1936, made possible by the entrance of new first- and second-generation immigrant and black voters into the New Deal coalition, what is most striking is the critical role played by face-to-face recruitment, whether by fledgling Congress of Industrial Organizations unions or new offshoots of long-established ethnic associations (Polish Democratic Clubs or Italian Democratic Leagues). Even the Republican mobilization of 1964 for Barry Goldwater was noteworthy not only for giving birth to such techniques of "retail politics" as direct mail but also for its grass-roots base. Middle-class southern Californians, for example, had painstakingly built a conservative movement through interacting at coffee klatches and barbecues in their suburban tract developments, on local anti-communism committees, and in their proliferating churches.

The revolution in political campaigning that Richard Viguerie launched in 1964 with direct mail has undeniably reshaped both parties over the last four decades. Democrats and Republicans have both embraced "slice-and-dice" politics, reaching out to voters as members of market segments with distinctive interests. And ironically, the Democrats, with their base in the urban and suburban milieus, have become more dependent on this retail politics than the Republicans, whose core red-state supporters remain involved in face-to-face organizations.

The historic Republican discovery in this election season was that all the sophisticated segmented marketing mattered less than face-to-face interaction with real members of a community. As an organizer of Catholics for Bush in Columbus, Ohio, put it, "The grass-roots effort did not exist in 2000. We tend to think grass roots is less sexy, but it does the job."

In other words, it may be less significant that Republican voters have a corner on religious faith and "moral values" than simply that they go to church. In rural and small-town America, churches are part of a network of viable community institutions and organizations—gun and garden clubs, PTAs, functioning neighborhoods—that are fast disappearing with the more hectic pace of life in urban and suburban America. The erosion of Democratic-oriented labor unions in these communities, then, is not only damaging to Democrats in and of itself; it is indicative of a larger decline in associational life in the heart of Democratic turf.

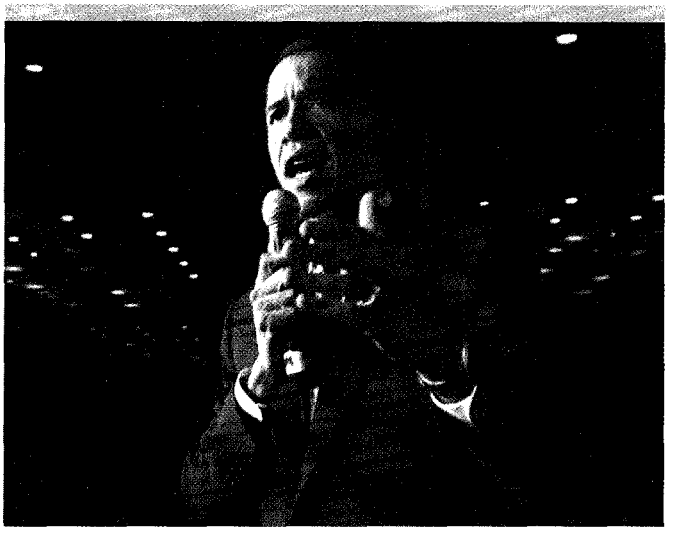
Moreover, the Republicans were hardly naive in this election about how to use face-to-face community outreach to expand their political base. *Time* magazine reported that the Bush campaign asked its volunteer recruits to "turn over their church directories" and to work their community networks in "Amway-like" pyramid structures aimed at getting voters to the polls. The Democrats, meanwhile, had New Yorkers calling Iowans long-distance urging them to vote.

Go to a working-class town, even in a state as blue as Massachusetts, and you will discover a powerful social bond that doesn't help the Democrats—a community built around the military. With brothers, sisters, cousins, neighbors, and high-school friends in the service or on call-up by the reserves, the military provides a ready recruiting ground for Republicans. One can only imagine the political capital that military identification produces in a West Virginia or an Alabama.

Of course, diagnosing this problem is far easier than remedying it. But this much is clear: Democrats must give more attention to mobilizing voters within whatever local organizations still matter. Continuing to push unionization of the growing ranks of low-wage workers who did vote for John Kerry is a must. In particular, labor unions can provide a counterforce to more conservative pulls on Latinos, who fill many low-level service jobs. Even military families struggling with deteriorating conditions in the armed services might rally to Democrats trumpeting their plight. Furthermore, if busy working parents have time for any activity, it often revolves around their children's schooling, making grass-roots coalitions for better education promising. And when aging baby boomers like me eventually have more time on our hands, who knows? We might start joining organizations and meeting our neighbors. Let's make sure the Democratic Party is ready and waiting. ■

LIZABETH COHEN *is the Howard Mumford Jones Professor of American Studies at Harvard University. She is the author of* Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939 *and* A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America.

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New Blood: Barack Obama on election night

Conviction Politics

One Democratic hero emerged from November 2. His fellow Democrats should study up on why.

BY RICK PERLSTEIN

IT MAY BE A BIT MUCH TO BEGIN MY REMARKS BY PUTTING pressure, like a deconstructionist, on a single word—a word that may have been just a throwaway—but I'll take the risk. Near the beginning of his thoughtful essay, Alan Brinkley writes, "[I]t's not hard to imagine centrist Democrats winning presidential elections in the future, even in four years." The word that stuck out for me is "centrist."

I *do* find it hard to imagine a Democrat who counts "centrism" as among his defining features winning a presidential election in the future. I'm not proposing liberal purity in centrism's stead; there are still lessons to be learned from some Democrats' earlier failures to frame themselves within the cultural mainstream. But this easy, a priori assumption that centrism solves all the problems that liberalism throws up needs to be seriously re-examined in light of this year's presidential election results.

In *The New Republic,* Jonathan Chait recently argued that "New Democrat–style centrism saddles its adherents with positions that straddle the political divide"—thus leaving them especially vulnerable to the Republicans' most devastating recent rhetorical attack: that they are flip-floppers. Brinkley acknowledges the point when he writes that John Kerry was hurt by "his image as a man without deep conviction." Contrariwise, voters who disagreed with George W. Bush's positions told interviewers that they voted for him nonetheless because he was a man of conviction.

This makes hash out of one of the most cherished findings of political science: the "median voter theorem"—recycled, at least in bastardized form, by pundits waxing on about the paramount importance of reaching swing voters. Swing voters, we are finding out, are not attracted to swing candidates. So what to do?

Reach out to evangelicals? I'm afraid most progressives offering that suggestion have no idea what this would actually entail. People who believe that intercessory prayer is an effective way to improve people's lives but that government action is not, will not be easily reached by Democrats attempting to speak "their language." The most indelible lesson I've learned this year consulting with apostates from southern evangelical culture is that we have deeply underestimated the organicist, hierarchical, mystical, and—God knows—hypocritical elements in its makeup. (The divorce rate in Mississippi is higher than that in Massachusetts, a point that can't be repeated often enough.) Reaching self-described "Christian voters" is more complicated and compromising than we have been bargaining for.

Here is a better first step to retaking red-state voters. We talk about southern culture, blue-collar culture, NASCAR culture—which overlaps, in complicated ways, with evangelical culture. Certainly one tenet they all share is this: When somebody punches you in the gut, you don't smile, stride halfway between his position and yours, and say that maybe the guy has a point. Behaving like that is precisely what has made the Democrats look so unsympathetically unfocused and confused to so many people. You have to convince them that you've got a fighting faith, too. Or else you can't fight.

Fortunately, we *do* have one: "that government can help provide us with the basic tools we need to live out the American dream."

Language like this would sound crazy—paleoliberal crazy—if this were not a direct quote from a speech the other day from the only Democratic hero to emerge from the mess on November 2: Barack Obama. Amid all the talk of Obama's shimmering appeal to a post-racial future, his light touch on the stump, and his language of faith and family and responsibility—all the things that convinced centrists he was fundamentally one of them—what most commentators managed to ignore was that the core of Obama's politics is traditional economic liberalism.

He delivered that message up and down the state, even in its conservative southern portions—rather like in an earlier Illinois Senate race. In the second Lincoln-Douglas debate, Stephen Douglas said his opponent would be singing a different, conservative tune once he was "trotted down into Egypt"—using the nickname that signified downstate Illinois' cultural affinity to the slaveholding South. Abraham Lincoln, like Barack Obama, pulled no punches on his core economic message—anywhere. The difference is that Obama won where Lincoln lost. Obama has a winning message, one whose time is ripe: that government can help people overcome their economic vulnerability. Kerry was not able to forthrightly deliver that message.

This is not to slight Obama's extraordinary skill at framing his liberal convictions on economics in ways that offended no one's cultural sensibilities: in terms of faith, family, and patriotism. He did it, however, while never splitting the difference with the Republicans programmatically. Obama un-

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derstands that policies that close the inequality gap are a punch to the gut of a conservative coalition that is a lot more fragile than at first it appears. ■

RICK PERLSTEIN *is chief national political correspondent for* The Village Voice *and the author of* Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus.

Think Globally

Just how many elections do Democrats have to lose before they deal with their foreign-policy problem?

BY JAMES MANN

THE 2004 ELECTION RESULTS CARRY ESPECIALLY PROFOUND implications for the Democrats on foreign policy. John Kerry's defeat means that the party must develop both new voices and a broader vision of America's role in the world.

It will not be sufficient to argue merely that the Republicans have bungled foreign policy. (If that message didn't work this time, amid the chaos of Iraq, will it ever?) Nor is it enough to claim that the Democrats have their own personnel with hands-on foreign-policy experience. How many presidential campaigns will the Democrats enter with the same old spokesmen, like Richard Holbrooke or Sandy Berger, arguing that if they were in office, they could manage things better than the Republicans?

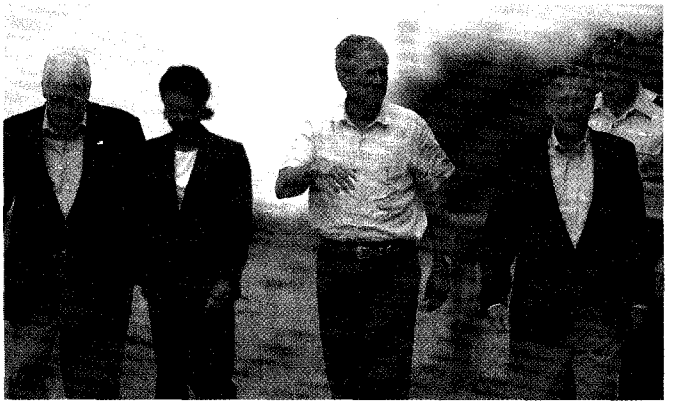
I agree with Alan Brinkley's assertion that the loss of the White House "is not the Democrats' most difficult challenge," and that overall, the erosion in Congress is more serious. Yet the loss of the presidency counts more in foreign policy, because foreign policy gets made mostly in the executive branch. That's where the jobs are. And so the fact that the Republicans have controlled the White House in five of the last seven elections (or seven of the last 10) means that over time, the Republicans possess considerably more opportunities to rise through the ranks via political appointments at the State and Defense departments.

So in coming elections, the Democrats probably won't be able to compete on the basis of experience. And they shouldn't. They need to develop a much deeper framework of ideas for their foreign policy. Yes, America needs to rebuild its alliances, as Kerry argued. But for what ends? To speak merely of alliances, without saying more, confines foreign policy to the rarefied world of the elites.

Do progressives believe the United States should seek to spread democracy? Or should the United States leave repressive countries alone and instead merely work to ensure its own security and prosperity? For some, these may be uncomfortable, simpleminded questions. Yet the inability to answer them leaves a presidential candidate unable to talk to ordinary voters about larger goals. One of Kerry's biggest failings was allowing President Bush to invoke—repeatedly and without challenge—the causes of freedom and democracy, as though these were uniquely Republican virtues. Kerry might have argued that the Bush administration has in fact set back the causes of freedom and democracy for years by linking these ideals so inextricably to the use of U.S. military power.

Brinkley urges progressive forces to make peace with the military. That's reasonable advice, as far as it goes. But there is a difference between getting along with the military and supporting the unjustified use of force, particularly in an era of preventive war. Indeed, the principal distinguishing characteristic of Bush and his advisers (the "Vulcans") has been their belief in the centrality of military power as America's principal tool in dealing with the world. The Democrats don't have to say "me, too" to that. Questioning the necessity and the costs of a Pentagon-based approach to the world should, in fact, be one core element in the vision the Democrats try to develop over the coming years.

It took the conservatives a long time to develop their views on foreign policy. After Barry Goldwater's defeat, more than a decade passed before Ronald Reagan, with his challenge to détente with the Soviet Union, began to make political headway in the 1976 primaries. The following year, conservative Richard Allen confessed to an interviewer that while he thought Reagan should be president, the chances of the conservatives gaining control of the White House were so remote he didn't even think about it. Four years later, Reagan was in the White House and Allen his national-security adviser.



Vulcan Nation: The Democrats need a team of their own.

The conservatives succeeded by settling on a few key themes and then continuing to refine them: that America should respond to the defeat in Vietnam by rebuilding its military might; that America should not seek accommodations with other powers; that America was not in decline, but in fact more powerful than its critics believed.

Even after the Soviet collapse, the hawks updated this vision for a new era. In 1992, then–Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and his undersecretary, Paul Wolfowitz, set down the guiding principles for U.S. foreign policy after the end of the Cold War: The United States should continue to build up its military power and technology to such an extent that no country could even think of competing with it.

This is the post–Cold War view of the world that has guided the Bush administration over the past four years and for which the Democrats need to offer an alternative. Kerry

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kept saying he had a specific "plan" for Iraq. In future elections, the Democrats need a deeper, more sweeping critique of the Vulcans' vision. ■

JAMES MANN *is the author of* Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet. *He is author-in-residence at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies.*

Mind the Gender Gap

Why Democrats are losing women at an alarming rate

BY ANNA GREENBERG

THE EROSION OF THE GENDER GAP IN THIS ELECTION starkly illustrates Alan Brinkley's insights regarding how issues of class and values pose challenges for progressives and the Democratic Party. In the last two presidential elections, the Democratic candidate won among women fairly decisively, by 16 points (Bill Clinton) and 11 points (Al Gore), respectively. In contrast, John Kerry won women voters by a mere 3 points, 51 percent to 48 percent. Kerry's trouble with women is clearly rooted in the decline of support among white, blue-collar women for Democratic candidates, a trend that reached its low point to date in this election.

During the 1990s, Democratic candidates struggled with white, blue-collar women while gaining ground with college-educated women. In 2000, Gore won 53 percent of the vote among women with a high-school education or less, 50 percent of the vote among women with some college education, and 57 percent of the vote among women with a college education. This represented a 5-point decline among high-school-educated women and a 3-point decline among women with some college education for the Democratic candidate from 1996. In 2004, George W. Bush made gains with women in general, but the increasing softness among blue-collar women took its toll. Kerry won college-educated women by 9 points (54 percent to 45 percent), broke even with women with a high-school education (50 percent to 49 percent)—a 3-point drop from 2000—and lost women with some college education by 2 points (49 percent to 51 percent). Even starker, in a post-election survey by Democracy Corps, Kerry lost white women without a college education this year by 23 points (38 percent to 61 percent).



She's Not Alone: Bush gained significantly among women.

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTO

The erosion of support for Democratic candidates among women represents a political transformation from a time when voters, both working class and affluent, voted in ways consistent with their economic interests. Today, despite the economic interests, socially conservative, white, blue-collar women have moved increasingly into the Republican camp, primarily around social and cultural issues that include perceived moral decline, abortion and reproductive health, challenges to women's traditional roles in society and family, and gay rights. This is not a recent development; it is the culmination of the increasing polarization around cultural issues that began in the 1970s and intensified in the 1990s.

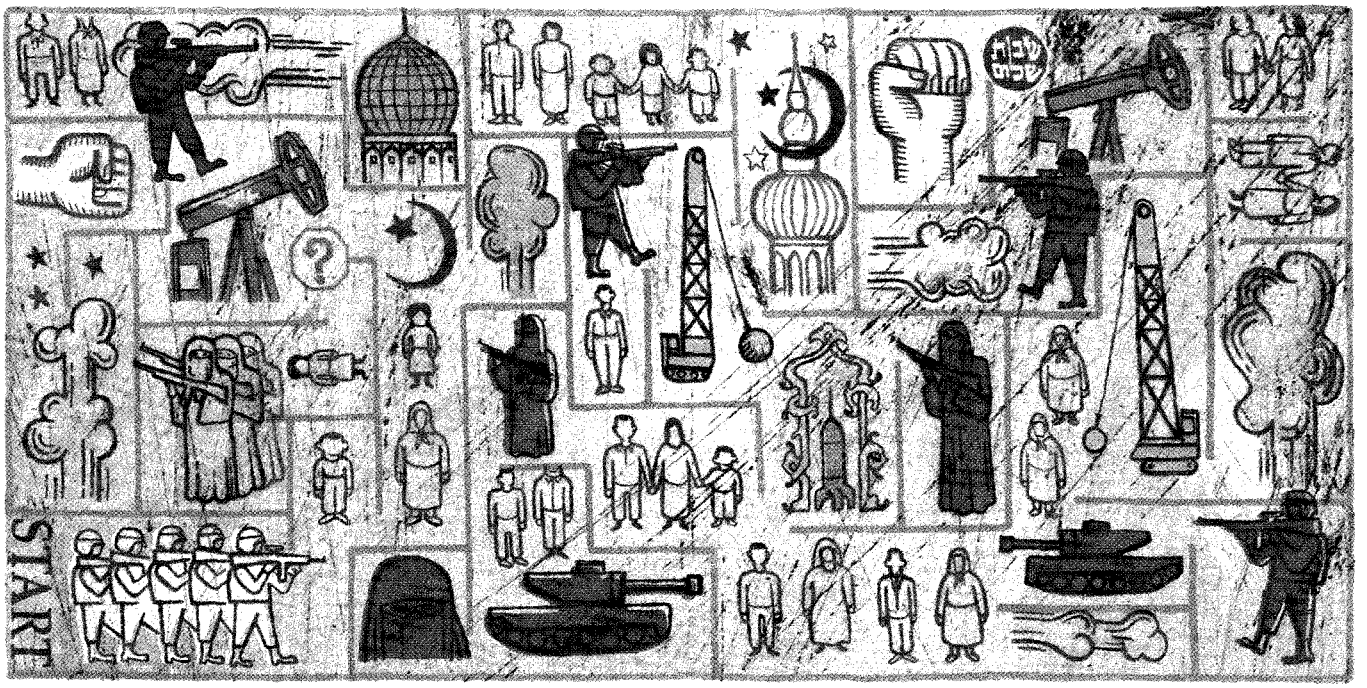
In this election, this trend proved true even among those blue-collar women voters who seemed most likely to vote for Kerry. White, older, blue-collar women are among the most economically insecure in our country, with deep concerns about health-care costs and retirement security. Those and other domestic topics dominated the campaign in the first part of 2004, at least in campaign advertising in the battleground states. During this period (February to April), Kerry led with white older women by an average of 7 points and white, older, non-college women by 2 points. By election day, Kerry *lost* white older women by 7 points and white, older, non-college women by 18 points. Even more striking, there was a 14-point gap between white, older, non-college women's identification with the Democratic Party (4-point Democratic disadvantage) and their support for Kerry (18-point disadvantage).

What happened over those months? Kerry lost ground with older, white, blue-collar women when the national discussion moved from health care, retirement, and other domestic priorities to security, the war on terrorism, and the war in Iraq. Starting with a Democratic convention focused on security and military experience, economic issues were largely absent from the national scene. In the absence of a real economic discussion, these voters swung to Bush as he tapped into their social conservatism, their support for his approach to the war on terrorism, and their admiration of his religious faith.

Brinkley clearly identifies the twin challenges of addressing the absence of a real economic vision and the "values" gap faced by progressives and Democrats, and these challenges are most dramatically felt among white blue-collar women. But this election shows that Democrats have opportunities to speak to some of the most economically vulnerable women voters—Kerry won unmarried women decisively (54 percent of whom earn less than $30,000 a year)—if they can offer a compelling narrative about how to promote women's economic security while emphasizing the shared values of opportunity, equality, tolerance, and fairness, and not ceding faith to the right. ■

ANNA GREENBERG *is the vice president of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research and a former professor at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.*

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Operation Save Face

Victory in Iraq as Bush has defined it is utterly unattainable. There's a better way out.

BY PETER W. GALBRAITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY FERRUCCIO SARDELLA

THERE IS NOTHING ABOUT THE PRESENT U.S. STRATEGY IN Iraq—if indeed the Bush administration's ever-shifting plans can be called a strategy—that suggests more of it will work. On January 31, national elections are scheduled in Iraq. Except when viewed through George W. Bush's perpetually rosy lenses, these elections seem likely to trigger an explosion of violence in large parts of the country. Successful elections may be even worse than thwarted ones. Voting could set the stage for civil war among Iraq's ethnic and confessional communities, which hold diametrically opposed ideas about the future of the country.

U.S. policy in Iraq from the day Saddam Hussein's statue fell to the present has been, without doubt, the most incompetently executed major American foreign-policy undertaking in at least 50 years. To succeed in transforming Iraq, the United States needs to secure the country and quickly begin to make a material difference in the lives of ordinary Iraqis. Operating on a plan based on the hope that police and bureaucrats would show up to work the day after Baghdad fell, the Bush administration did nothing to prevent the systematic looting of every government ministry in the months that followed the start of the U.S. occupation. Twenty months later, the U.S. military has been unable provide security, while efforts to train a new Iraqi police and army have been inept and slow. The administration turned Iraqi reconstruction over to political cronies and favored companies, with the result being that little has been accomplished. So far, less than 15 percent of the funds appropriated for reconstruction have actually been spent.

Bush's greatest failure, however, has been his administration's inability to produce a political agreement among the peoples of Iraq. I counted at least six different U.S. political strategies for how to handle Iraq's political transition. Each foundered after being opposed by the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and Iraq's Shia religious establishment.

A political settlement among Iraq's Kurds, Shia, and Sunni Arabs is a precondition to creating an internal viable security force and to the effective spending of reconstruction money. The alternative is, as the CIA warned in July, civil war (a warning Bush dismissed, saying that the Iraqi people did not share the CIA's pessimism).

ANY POLITICAL SETTLEMENT MUST TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE fact that Iraq has broken apart and cannot be put back together again as a unitary state. The Bush administration has persisted in the belief that there is such a thing as "the Iraqi people," and that Iraq could become a multicultural democracy very much like the United States. As Paul Bremer, the former head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, put it in an April 2004 speech, "The path to a new Iraq [is one] ... where the majority is not Sunni, Shia, Arab, Kurd, or Turkoman but Iraqi."

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Iraq is not like the United States. It was put together by the victorious allies at the end of the First World War out of three disparate Ottoman *vilayets* (or provinces): Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra. The country never commanded the loyalty of its citizens. Further, the ethnic and confessional lines of 80 years ago remain in place. Kurdistan in the north is Kurdish, with Turkoman and Christian minorities. The center is Sunni Arab, and the south is Shia Arab. (The city of Mosul is majority Arab and is not considered part of Kurdistan.) Only the city of Baghdad has changed, where Shia and Kurdish immigration has made Sunni Arabs a minority. Even so, each community lives largely in its own part of the city.

Iraq's divisions are not just ethnic and religious. They are compounded by a bitter history in which both the Kurds and the Shia have suffered grievously, and by very different value systems that place secular, Western-oriented Kurds at one end of a spectrum and religiously inclined Shia at the other.

The Kurds do not want to be Iraqi at all. When the country was formed, the Kurdish leaders of the day told the allies that they did not want to join. When their views were ignored, they launched a series of rebellions that have continued more or less to the present day. Successive central governments responded with repression, which in the 1980s evolved into genocide. Saddam Hussein systematically destroyed nearly every village in Kurdistan, deported and executed more than 100,000 civilians, and bombarded more than 200 villages with chemical weapons.

Since 1991, Kurdistan has been a de facto independent country. In 1992, the Kurds organized free elections for their own parliament. Today, the Kurdistan Regional Government controls the region's budget, police, educational system, and natural resources. Iraqi law applies only if the Kurdistan Regional Assembly chooses to enact it for the region, and the assembly often enacts separate Kurdistan law. Most importantly, Kurdistan has its own army—the 75,000-strong *peshmerga*—that is today more potent than any Iraqi military.

The Kurdish people see their 13 years of self-government as a golden period in which they rebuilt the destroyed villages, constructed two new universities and 2,000 new schools (trebling the number that existed in Hussein's time), prospered economically in spite of sanctions, and developed a pluralistic and semi-democratic political culture with an explosion of Kurdish media and independent organizations. Younger Kurds don't speak Arabic and have no Iraqi identity; for the older generation, Iraq is only a nightmare. The Kurds are secular and very pro-American. In one month earlier this year, a coalition of Kurdish nongovernmental organizations collected 1,700,000 signatures on a petition demanding a vote for independence—a figure that represents some 80 percent of Kurdistan's adults. The Kurds want to maintain their independence, and they see no force in Iraq—or internationally—that can make them give it up.

Iraq's Shia also have a history of repression and discrimination at the hands of Sunni Arabs—and a historical sense of grievance that goes back 1,400 years. Following the failed 1991 uprising, Hussein's forces massacred as many 300,000 Shia, and, during the ensuing decade of sanctions and privation, Baghdad provided the Shia with smaller rations than Sunnis and fewer services. While the Shia were the prime beneficiaries of the U.S. invasion, their deep-seated suspicion about the United States goes back to 1991, when the first President Bush called for an uprising and then lent Hussein a free hand to massacre the rebels. Still, it was a singular achievement of the current Bush administration to alienate so many Shia in such a short period of time.

The Shia identity is a religious one, and today the Shia overwhelmingly support religious parties (much as Kurds support nationalist ones). These run the gamut, from the pro-Iranian Dawa Party and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) to the more radical followers of Muqtada al-Sadr. The Shia believe it is their moment to run Iraq, and they want a state in which Islam is the principal source of law. This brings them into direct conflict with the secular Kurds.

The Kurds see their 13 years of self-government as a golden period in which they have rebuilt villages and constructed two new universities and 2,000 new schools.

Southern Iraq is governed not from Baghdad but by an informal system involving the mosques, the religious parties, and the militias associated with the religious parties. The officials assigned to represent Baghdad in the Shia areas were either chosen by the religious establishment or have been co-opted by it. The Shia religious leaders handle their region's security, are implementing a revised educational system, and provide many vital services. Although not formally as separate as Kurdistan, the Shia south is functionally separate.

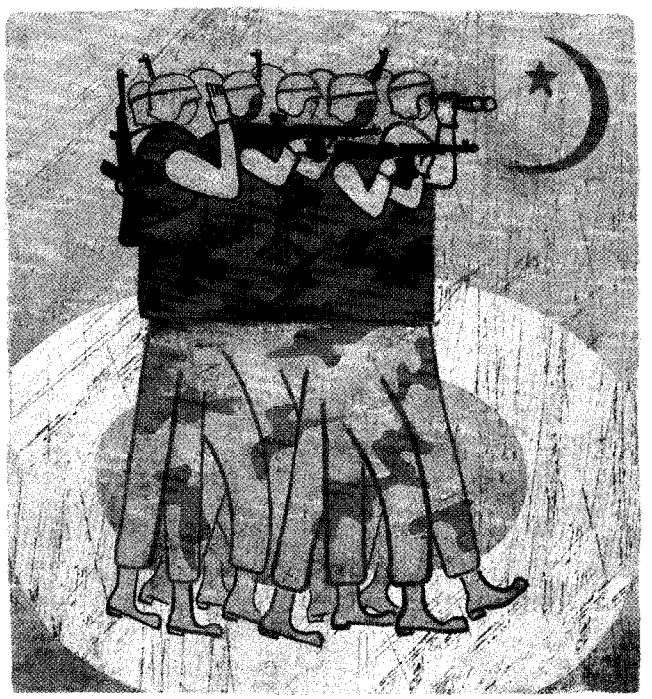
The Sunni Arabs, in spite of comprising just 15 percent of the population, ran Iraq from its founding until the 2003 U.S. invasion. Historically, the Sunni Arabs have been Iraqi nationalists and pan-Arabists (linked therefore to the Sunni Arab majority in the Arab world). Today, they experience not only the loss of power and position but fear domination by the Kurds and the Shia. With Iraqi nationalism no longer equated with Sunni Arab power, religious parties—including those associated with fundamentalist sects—have made inroads into Sunni areas. Tribal leaders have influence, but few risk their lives to take on the insurgents. As a result, today's Sunni Arabs are largely disenfranchised in Iraq.

The separation of Iraq into Kurdistan and an Arab state may well occur in the next decade. In the short term, however, a breakup is highly undesirable. Unresolved territorial issues between Kurds and Arabs could mean a bloody fight, notably over the ethnically mixed city of Kirkuk. Turkey, long fearful that an independent Kurdistan in Iraq could

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reignite separatism among its own Kurds, would vehemently oppose Iraq's breakup. Even if it didn't invade, Turkey could make life miserable for an independent Kurdistan. Iran and Syria, also home to millions of Kurds, likewise oppose Kurdish independence.

Because Kurdistan can neither be brought back under Baghdad's control nor become fully independent, a loose confederation becomes the only plausible political settlement to keep Arabs and Kurds together in Iraq. Arabs are, of course, divided between Sunnis and Shia. If there is a single Arab entity, the Shia will dominate, fueling resentment among Sunnis. Further, because politics in both communities has a predominantly religious character, the schism between the two branches of Islam will become more pronounced. Under these circumstances, it makes sense for each confessional community to govern itself in its own state. Baghdad, home to all three communities, could become its own unit, like Brussels in Belgium.



In a confederation, each of the three Iraqi states (and Baghdad) would have its own government and parliament. The state, not the central government, should be sovereign in almost all competencies, including religion, education, police, budget, and local economy. Each Iraqi state should own and manage its own petroleum and water resources. Without controlling the principal source of revenue, the Iraqi states cannot become fully self-governing. All of Iraq's regions have some oil, but by far the largest fields are in the south and under Kirkuk. As in Canada, the well-endowed Iraqi states would have to share some of their oil wealth with other regions.

Each Iraqi state should control its own military, security services, and police. This is already formally the case in Kurdistan and the de facto situation in much of the south. The Iraqi army has been the only enemy both the Kurds and the Shia have known. The Kurdistan Regional Government refuses even to permit the new Iraqi army to enter its territory, and will insist on a constitutional provision giving itself a veto over any deployment of the central government's military to Kurdistan.

Considering the antipathy that so many Iraqis have toward the Iraqi military, it should not have been any surprise that few recruits were prepared to fight against the insurgents. With 60-percent unemployment, Arabs are willing to join the U.S.–created army, but few owe it any loyalty. By contrast, being a *peshmerga* is a rite of passage for Kurdish men, while the militias associated with the Shia religious parties also have loyal and motivated fighters. Converting the *peshmerga* into the Kurdistan security force has already taken place, with the acquiescence of the Bush administration (which in a particularly silly gesture insisted that the bulk of the *peshmerga* be called "mountain rangers" in English). The militias associated with the two long-established Shia religious parties, Dawa and SCIRI, are disciplined and could become the nucleus of a southern Iraq security force. It would not be a pro-American force, but it could keep order.

The central government should have relatively few powers in an Iraqi confederation; foreign affairs, currency, and customs are the obvious ones. In addition, certain central government ministries would have an important role in fostering cooperation among the three states. The oil ministry, for example, would have an essential role in managing a pipeline system that crosses all three states and allocating exports within Iraq's Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Companies quota. The Water Resources Ministry would need to coordinate water use to ensure fair allocation among all regions.

A confederation is the easiest political system to implement in Iraq because it reflects the reality on the ground. While some will argue that it is a formula for the country's breakup, it may actually foster greater cooperation among Iraq's states. Freed from fear of Baghdad domination, the three states may see practical reasons for cooperation.

Besides, there is no realistic alternative. Prime Minister Iyad Allawi is, as one Iraqi described him to me, the mayor of Baghdad's "Green Zone." There is no practical way to extend the central government's authority into Kurdistan or to alter the de facto arrangements in the south. The central government may have to take over the Sunni Triangle if the insurgency continues in its present virulent form, but it is far from clear as to whether it can actually do so even with U.S. military support.

NEGOTIATING A CONFEDERATION WOULD REQUIRE THE same level of diplomatic engagement that President Bill Clinton and Richard Holbrooke brought to ending the Bosnia war (and, if he really wanted to be bipartisan, President Bush could ask Holbrooke to broker a confederation deal). At the start, the Shia would need to be convinced that their electoral majority does not mean that they can impose their will on all of Iraq. This would be difficult when the most influential Shia leader, al-Sistani, refuses to meet with U.S. officials. If boycotts and violence reduce voting in the Sunni Triangle, U.S. negotiators may not find Sunni Arab interlocutors who can actually deliver their region in a deal. A second set of elections may be needed in the Sunni Triangle if the insur-

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gency there can be contained. The Kurds may have to compromise on territorial issues, including their claim to Kirkuk. The Kurdish leaders, who have been working below the U.S. radar to return Kurds to the homes from which Hussein expelled them as part of his forced "Arabization" program, assert that Kirkuk is their Jerusalem and a nonnegotiable part of Kurdistan.

In 2004, the United States fought two insurgencies: the Shia insurgency of al-Sadr, which extended from Baghdad's Shia slums to Basra, and the ongoing insurgency in the Sunni Triangle. In spite of Bush administration attempts to dismiss his importance, al-Sadr has real support among the Shia. Not only was he able to mobilize his Mahdi Army in most Shia cities, U.S. government–sponsored polls show he is one of the most popular politicians in Iraq. His popularity is directly related to the Bush administration's failure to spend reconstruction money and thereby make a material difference in the lives of Iraq's Shia.

But the Shia insurgency can be fixed. Al-Sadr's popularity gives him an incentive to enter the electoral process, and he seems inclined to do so. Moderate Shia leaders were reluctant to take al-Sadr on when the contest was between him and the American occupiers; now, they will not allow him such leeway in a challenge to their own state. And al-Sadr himself has been unwilling to take on the more senior Shia religious establishment directly. A self-governing Shia area, combined with meaningful spending of reconstruction funds, should solve the al-Sadr problem.

The Sunni Triangle insurgency is far harder to end. Even after a year of escalating warfare, neither the U.S. military nor the Iraqi interim government seems to have a clear idea about the enemy. During an October visit to northern Iraq, I gained some insight into the situation in Mosul. Iraq's third largest city, Mosul is fast becoming a bigger version of Fallujah. Kidnappings, car bombings, beheadings, and assassinations are increasingly common, with the targets being the U.S. occupation forces, the representatives of the Iraqi interim government, and ethnic Kurds who inhabit the east side of the city. The insurgents include Arab nationalists, ex-army officers, and Sunni fundamentalists. The insurgents have created a de facto administration in Arab west Mosul, collecting "taxes" and imposing a rough justice. With the death penalty meted out for even relatively minor offenses (prostitution, a doctor ignoring a warning to lower his fees), there are shades of the Taliban.

The police and, according to some Iraqis, the U.S.–appointed police chief cooperate with insurgents. They help set up kidnappings and roadside bombings by alerting insurgents when a kidnapping target, or U.S. convoy, rolls by a police checkpoint. And they look the other way when armed insurgents pass through the checkpoints. It is impossible to know how much this local cooperation with the insurgents comes from anti-American sentiment and how much from fear. There is, however, no critical mass within Mosul—nor, it appears, within any other Sunni Triangle city—to take on the insurgency.

In an optimistic scenario, elections in the Sunni Triangle for the central Iraq state government would produce moderate leaders with real power. Even if this doesn't happen, though, the United States could train Sunni Arab forces associated with more moderate leaders in hopes that they—perhaps with help from the Kurdistan and southern security forces—could contain, if not fully defeat, the insurgency.

The United States has no military solution to the Sunni Arab insurgency. Air strikes into urban areas may kill insurgents and terrorists, but they also kill civilians in whose midst the enemy operates. From the insurgent perspective such collateral damage is desirable, as it makes new enemies for the Americans. Further, none of the Iraqis involved in intelligence activities with whom I spoke thinks that the United States has good enough intelligence to know reliably that a proposed target really belongs to the insurgents and terrorists.

Still, the United States cannot simply withdraw from Iraq. Leaving central Iraq in the hands of the insurgents is too risky, as the area could become what Afghanistan was under the Taliban: a base from which terrorists plot attacks on the United States. Rather than withdraw from Iraq as a whole, the United States could redeploy some troops to bases in Kurdistan. Having thrown in their lot with America, the Kurdish leaders are desperate for the security that would come with permanent U.S. bases in their territory.

None of the Iraqis with whom I spoke thinks that the United States has good enough intelligence to know reliably that a proposed target really belongs to the insurgents.

From Kurdistan, the United States could organize training of the Shia, Sunni, and Kurdish security forces, without the provocation of having large numbers of American soldiers on Arab land. The United States could also be poised to intervene in the Sunni Triangle should extremists or terrorists get the upper hand.

Getting the politics right would enable the United States to address the security challenge. It is essential that this be accompanied by rapid measures to improve the lives of ordinary Iraqis. Stunningly, the Bush administration has spent only a small fraction of the $18.4 billion appropriated for reconstruction. A full year after the funding became available, a little more than $1.5 billion had been spent. Further, because of contractor overhead, security, and negotiated profit, just 27 cents of every dollar appropriated actually benefits Iraqis.

This system should be scrapped in favor of direct grants to the new state governments and to local governments. Regional governments and contractors in Iraq have much lower costs and can be much more efficient in spending reconstruction money than U.S. contractors. In the fiscal year from mid-2003 to mid-2004, the Kurdistan Regional Government received a block grant equal to 6 percent of Iraq's

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total budget—less than one-half of the per capita amount that was allocated to other Iraqis. The Kurds spent the money so efficiently that there is actually a labor shortage in Sulaimaniya, the region's second-largest city, and close to full employment elsewhere. A visitor to Kurdistan sees activity everywhere—from the building of new roads and airports to construction of public buildings—that contrasts with the lack of activity and 60-plus-percent unemployment rate in Arab Iraq. Making block grants brings with it the risk of corruption and theft, but it is hard to imagine that this would consume the same 73-percent share that now goes to U.S. contractors—some of whom are at the center of scandals involving overcharging and other abuses.

With a credible political, security, and economic plan, President Bush should convene a summit to ask allies for help. More troops will not be forthcoming, but nor will they be needed. Any workable political plan would involve turning over security in northern and southern Iraq to the Kurdistan and Shia governments, respectively. Nor should the United States want to stay long in the Sunni Triangle. But other countries can contribute to training of the various local security forces. In Arab Iraq, a non-American face on these activities could be a distinct advantage.

GEORGE W. BUSH HAS BEEN THE MOST RADICAL U.S. president in foreign affairs since Woodrow Wilson. Bush has articulated a new doctrine of preemption, preferred a "coalition of the willing" to traditional alliances, and exhibited contempt for the United Nations and a disregard for international law. Most ambitious of all, he has established a national goal of transforming the Arab world into a Western-style democracy and is willing to commit the U.S. military to achieving it. (For the president and his neoconservative advisers, the dream of a democratic Middle East was, I think, a far more important reason for the Iraq War than concerns over weapons of mass destruction.) Liberals, who believe in international law and the United Nations, oppose Bush's agenda on philosophical grounds. But it should be reversed for practical, and not just philosophical, reasons. The Bush agenda makes for a poor national-security strategy that has left our country weaker and more vulnerable.

National-security strategy is about prioritizing, but Bush has never prioritized. He's acted as if he has unlimited resources, and he's never considered the possibility that his chosen strategies might not work. The Bush preemption doctrine does not distinguish between imminent and distant threats. So while Bush focused on the distant threat posed by Iraq's nonexistent weapons of mass destruction, the global nuclear nonproliferation regime began to unravel. North Korea denounced the 1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), expelled International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors, and took plutonium previously under safeguards and claims to have made six nuclear weapons. Iran has enriched uranium and seems intent on developing nuclear weapons. In 1994, President Clinton threatened war to force North Korea to enter into an agreement to freeze its nuclear weapons. But when North Korea cheated on that agreement, the Bush administration talked loudly—provoking North Korea to pull out of the NPT—and did nothing. The Iraq invasion was meant to intimidate North Korea and Iran into giving up their nuclear programs. Bush did not consider how these countries would see a situation where nine out of 10 active-duty Army divisions are in Iraq or Afghanistan (or preparing to go). Iraq was all-consuming.

U.S. foreign policy should return to basics. We need to focus resources on the main threat, which is the danger that hostile states linked (at least in the recent past) to terrorism will acquire nuclear weapons (Iran, North Korea), or that states without adequate controls (Pakistan) will share them. Also, President Bush should abandon his nonchalant attitude toward Osama bin Laden's whereabouts. Not only is there the matter of justice for the murder of nearly 3,000 of our countrymen, there is the commonsense point that, if bin Laden can send a video to Al-Jazeera, he can still coordinate terrorist attacks.

Finally, Bush might reconsider his attitude toward the United Nations. It is, of course, an imperfect institution reflecting a world with more than 190 disparate countries and thousands of transnational actors. But, as Bush found out, the UN can do things that the United States cannot. Bush needed the United Nations to design and oversee an election system in Iraq and Afghanistan providing an impartiality and competence that the United States does not have (not surprisingly, the rest of the world is not impressed with how the United States conducts its elections). The UN has unique expertise in the hardest of all international undertakings: helping rebuild societies after conflicts. One need only compare the United Nations' record in places like East Timor and Kosovo with how the Bush administration has managed the occupation in Iraq. I served in the UN mission in East Timor, and at least half the staff fielded by the United Nations was competent.

The provisions of the UN Charter on the use of force turn out not only to be a legal nicety but also a critical step to success. Thanks to a UN resolution (1441) combined with a U.S. military deployment to the region, Saddam Hussein readmitted UN inspectors who were on the verge of discovering that Iraq no longer had weapons of mass destruction. Had Bush stopped there, his Iraq policy would have been seen as a brilliant example of coercive diplomacy, and he would likely have coasted to a second term.

But Bush is nothing if not stubborn. He is committed to "victory," which his administration has defined as a unitary and democratic Iraq. So defined, victory is unattainable (as well as undesirable). Iraq's elections almost certainly will provide a dose of reality that even this president cannot ignore. Let us hope that Bush can turn his focus to the most serious threats to American security. In order to be able to do so, however, he will have to get out of Iraq quickly and with a modicum of honor. This is possible only through a negotiated confederation. ■

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Facing Up

The fix the Democrats find themselves in cannot be attributed to the evil, tricky genius of Karl Rove or the ignorance of the American people. The Democrats face big problems of their own making. Here, *Prospect* writers look at how the party has mishandled four important issues and suggest new approaches.

SELF-INTEREST

Heal Thy 'Self'

What the Democrats didn't get: For most middle-class people, self-interest means far more than economics.

BY GARANCE FRANKE-RUTA

IT'S TIME FOR THE QUADRENNIAL DEMOCRATIC LAMENT about the false consciousness and dismaying distractibility of the poor. "John Kerry's supporters should be feeling wretched about the millions of farmers, factory workers and waitresses who ended up voting—utterly against their own interests—for Republican candidates," wrote Nicholas Kristof in *The New York Times* two days after the election. "One of the Republican Party's major successes over the last few decades has been to persuade many of the working poor to vote for tax breaks for billionaires." Matt Miller in the *LA Weekly* opined, "When [the] 'values' discussion is played out on the turf of gay marriage and not on, say, the abuses of crony capitalism, then Democrats aren't properly defining the debate." The Republican goal, agreed Diane McWhorter on *Slate*, is to "[s]educe the have-nots into a strange bedfellow-ship with the haves through emotional tribal markers that strike at some pre-rational sense of identity. Then they will be persuaded to vote against their own self-interest."

While the argument is true on some level, it also misses the point. The idea that millions of Americans vote against their economic self-interest because they can't comprehend where their true interests lie is rooted in a materialist vision of politics that fundamentally misunderstands what millions of people value most in life. It's a concept that is condescending, politically harmfully, and—most importantly—verifiably false. Several decades of social-science research—an entire literature on voting and self-interest—have shown that the "self-interested voter hypothesis," as it's known, fails to satisfactorily explain American political behavior. More generally, this purely materialist vision of self-interest simply misunderstands human nature.

Politics has always been as much about identity and community—not to mention raw group power—as about the economy. Self-interest defined in purely economic terms is an idea that reduces the Democratic Party to little more than the human-resources department of American politics, endlessly fussing over pensions and health-care plans and whether or not you got your flu shot, rather than a party concerned with the fundamental stuff of life: who we are, how we organize our society, and what it means to be American at this particular moment in history.

To be sure, Democrats from Bill Clinton to John Edwards have talked about everything from tax policy to the budget deficit as reflecting American values and identity. But, as researchers have discovered, a lot of other values-based elements come into play as voters go to the polls. Bryan Caplan at George Mason University, a bastion of libertarian and conservative scholarship that has become increasingly influential in Washington over the past decade, has found that the greatest predictors of political behavior are not income, race, gender, or even education; they are political ideology and party affiliation. This seems intuitively obvious—Kerry and George W. Bush both received better than 90-percent support from members of their own parties—and completely banal. Yet the relationship between the first set of markers and the second is not always an economically self-interested one. "Measures of self-interest have little or no predictive utility for beliefs about unemployment policy, national health insurance, busing, or crime," Caplan notes in reviewing the literature on the subject.

Individuals are also motivated by the social capital they or their ideological groups can acquire through voting, and by pride, prestige, self-esteem, piety, and hope. They are inspired by the psychological benefits of their beliefs—even erroneous or irrational ones—if those beliefs are unlikely to have significant negative costs. "If the most pleasant belief for an individual differs from the belief dictated by rational expectations," writes Caplan, "agents weigh the hedonic benefits of deviating from rational expectations against the expected costs of self-delusion." Which is to say, if it's more pleasurable for an individual to believe that one day he may be rich and need the Bush tax cuts for the very wealthy, and if there is little cost to him in supporting Bush because both the president and Kerry promised to preserve the ones for the middle class, he may embrace the vision of his own future wealth in supporting Bush while seeing a vote for Kerry as a vote against the possibility of social mobility.

Similarly, members of the military clearly have a self-interest in not being sent to Iraq, where they might be killed,

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but nonetheless overwhelmingly supported the re-election of the president, just as friends and relatives of individuals serving in Vietnam were found, in a 1978 study, to have been more in favor of the war than the general public, even though the consequences of that support could have been the death of a family member. Clearly, members of the military, who are usually drawn from the more economically strapped sectors and are not paid particularly well, do not vote out of economic self-interest. Rather, they and their families are politically transformed by their group participation and have an ethic of self-sacrifice for the greater good that leads them to reject assertions that their project and the deaths it causes are due to "a mistake."

To be sure, the economically self-interested voter hypothesis has persisted because it holds predictive power—up to a point. But where that point lies is critical. Truly poor individuals with family incomes of less than $15,000 per year voted for Kerry by an overwhelming margin, 63 percent to 36 percent, according to the National Election Pool exit poll. The working poor and lower middle classes, earning between $15,000 and $30,000, also backed Kerry by a sizable margin, 57 percent to 42 percent. Kerry even narrowly edged Bush among those earning $30,000 to $50,000 a year. These voters are struggling to pay their bills and worrying about health care, pensions, and job security. They cannot afford to vote on other issues.

But once a household gets up to the $50,000 a year level, watch out. It's among these groups that alternative self-interest sets in. The group that Kerry was most hurt by losing was only middle class. Kerry and John Edwards argued—and banked on the fact—that voters from this bloc were experiencing a "middle-class squeeze" due to increased college-tuition costs, higher local property taxes, and other changes, such as the higher price of gas. But the facts seem to indicate that while these voters were by no means wealthy, they were also doing well enough to give primacy to other considerations—the threat of terrorism, gay marriage, abortion, nebulous considerations about who most supported their lifestyles—in the voting booth. Their votes were influenced by the power of ideas and ideology.

Time and again, Democrats make the mistake of believing that economic self-interest will guide voters above this income range; they fervently believe—or hope—that the cutoff will be $80,000 or $100,000. But it simply is not. In 2000, Al Gore was unable to rack up a margin of victory in any population group earning more than $50,000 a year. Kerry lost households earning between $50,000 and $75,000 annually, 56 percent to 43 percent. And, because a narrow majority of the electorate (55 percent) earned more than $50,000, the baseline prosperity of the electorate helped do Kerry in. Indeed, more voters in 2004 earned $100,000 to $150,000 a year than less than $15,000 a year—a stunning fact. And close to one in five voters in 2004 came from a household making more than $100,000 each year.



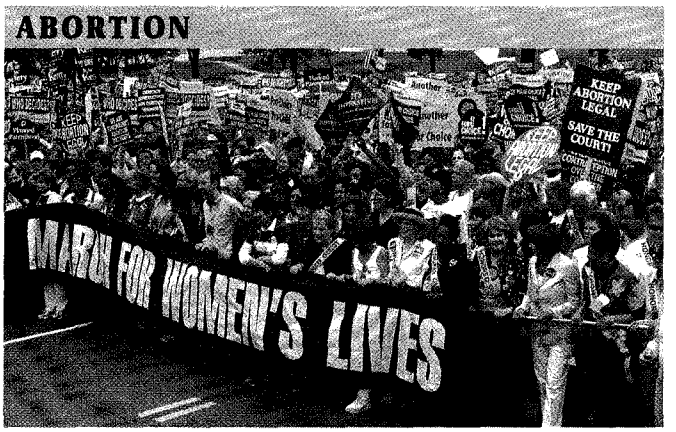
THE IMAGE BANK/GETTY IMAGES

Democrats often point out that the median American family income has declined over the past few years. They're right, but in the last decade—thanks, in part, to the boom of the Clinton years—it's also true that the upper end of the middle class got richer. "In 2003," noted economics writer Robert Samuelson in *Newsweek*, looking at the census data, "44 percent of U.S. households had before-tax incomes exceeding $50,000; about 15 percent had incomes of more than $100,000 (they're also included in the 44 percent). In 1990 the comparable figures were 40 percent and 10 percent. In 1980 they were 35 percent and 6 percent." (All figures were adjusted for inflation.) Record-high homeownership rates and soaring real-estate prices also provide many individuals with a substantial sense of security and an expectation of stability, which some studies have shown are as important as income growth in predicting electoral behavior. These are changes that Democrats need to address while weighing their populist economic messages against other appeals.

Many commentators have argued that Democrats were trumped in 2004 by the unexpected importance of conservative values. But the data shows that what they really need to start dealing with are not simply conservative moral values but the broad set of values of the middle class. In fact, the Democratic challenge to the notion of the "rational," self-

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interested voter should come naturally. This concept is imported from a strain of neoclassical economic thinking that elevates the science of "the mechanics of utility and self-interest," as British economist W. Stanley Jevons dubbed it. When it comes to economics, liberals have long argued against the idea of the self-regulating market. If liberals know that markets are not always rational, why do they continue to insist that the individuals who participate in them must be perfectly so? ■



The Sloganeers: At last April's abortion-rights march in Washington

Choice Language

Abortion is a right that ends in sorrow. Democratic rhetoric in the future must acknowledge this fact.

BY SARAH BLUSTAIN

OK, I'VE UNLISTED MY PHONE NUMBER, CHANGED MY NAME, and moved to a different (red) state. Now I can safely say it: The Democratic defense of abortion makes me cringe.

It's the stridency, the insistence, the repetition of a "woman's right to choose." It rubs me the wrong way—and I'm one of those classic 30-something, northeastern, educated, *pro-choice* women who believes the message. I'm tormented by the idea that even as I support Democratic candidates—and, yes, on this issue—I'm turned off by their abortion rhetoric.

I'm not alone. Poll after poll shows that a majority, albeit a slim one, of Americans favor access to abortion. An ABC News/*Washington Post* poll from May of this year found that 54 percent of those asked said they thought that abortion should be legal in all or most cases. Similarly, 55 percent told a *Time*/CNN poll in January 2003 that they favored the Supreme Court ruling "that women have the right to have an abortion during the first three months of pregnancy." And yet, as our most recent election made clear, some percentage of those poll respondents obviously support anti-abortion candidates. Put more precisely, fully one-third of pro-choice Americans voted for George W. Bush, according to NARAL Pro-Choice America. So the question is, how can Democrats soften their rhetoric while maintaining their support for safe, accessible abortion?

As long as I can remember, the tone of the liberal message on abortion has been defiant, sometimes even celebratory. It's an attitude that reflects the victory of legal abortion over back-alley dangers three decades ago—a success that many who remember it still experience with deep emotion. It also reflects a certain well-deserved panic: Due to the rising tide of anti-abortion sentiment, abortions are available in only 13 percent of counties in this country, according to Medical Students for Choice; in his first term, Bush appointed more than 200 new anti-abortion federal judges.

Still, for those of us who came after *Roe v. Wade*, there is a significantly different reality. The context has changed. Back alleys and coat hangers are not part of our visceral memory. To this generation, the "choice" of a legal abortion is no longer something to celebrate. It is a decision made in crisis, and it is never one made happily. Have you ever talked to a woman who has had an abortion? Even a married, intentionally pregnant woman who has had a "D and C" for a dying or dead embryo? A college student whose birth control failed? I promise you, such a woman does not talk about exercising the "right to choose." You may accuse her—and me—of taking such rights for granted, and maybe you'd be right. But mainly she will tell you how sad she is, how she wished she hadn't had to make that "choice," how unpleasant the procedure was. She is more likely depressed than defiant.

That's why liberalism's vocabulary of "rights" when it comes to abortion rings a little hollow. It's constitutional, intellectual—and not nuanced enough to absorb the emotional or even legal complexity. "There is no organizational apparatus for the middle ground," Cynthia Gorney, author of "Articles of Faith: A Frontline History of the Abortion Wars" and a member of the faculty of the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley, told me. "The way that the advocacy groups have organized themselves ... has been all or nothing." After all, abortion is a right that ends in sorrow, not celebration. It's not like women's suffrage or the equal access to public accommodations, rights whose outcome is emotionally unambiguous. The vocabulary that was so powerful in the 1950s, '60s, and '70s means something different today. The national debates—on welfare, on affirmative action, and, yes, on abortion—have underscored the nuances. The question no longer seems as simple as, "Are you for or against?" We are for. But *how* are we for, to what extent, and at what cost?

In April, I attended—ambivalently, reluctantly, and under peer pressure—the March for Women's Lives, one of the largest rallies in American history, with about a million other people on the National Mall in Washington. The anti-abortion lobby had been successful in pushing its agenda on the Bush administration, and the abortion-rights world knew that this election year represented a key moment to rally the opposition. My friends had come in from Colorado and New York. They had traveled a long way, and they made it clear it was time for me to join in. So I marched with the Planned Parenthood delegation from Colorado.

It was a pleasant spring day. Sunny and clear. Nearly every hand held a pink National Organization for Women sign or a blue Planned Parenthood placard, and there were thousands more for the taking piled everywhere along the perimeter of

RICK STEELE/UPI/LANDOV

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the Mall. Other signs read "My Body Is Not Public Property!" and "It's Your Choice, Not Theirs!" The rally was long, the speeches endless. It was the worst example of liberal politicking at work—every member of every interest group had to say something, often the same thing; a real rainbow coalition in action. Eleanor Smeal, president of the Feminist Majority Foundation, said we were there to "stop this war on women." The tone was one of utter defiance, and rightly so.

But the rally ultimately left me cold. I realized I was more aware of the ambivalence felt by women who had had legal abortions than by those who, decades before, had died in back-alley abortions. Bill Clinton was much closer to this understanding when he pushed for abortions to be "safe, legal, and rare." That line, generated by the White House, caught the spirit of our country. People responded to it positively, says Gloria Feldt, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, because "we all believe that prevention is better than a cure." When Clinton left, for the most part, the phrase did too, but "safe, legal, and rare" is what we all want. No one, not even Smeal or Gloria Steinem, is ever "pro-abortion." Legal, safe abortion is the best outcome for what is always a bad situation.

Finally, after a couple of hours of standing, the entire mass of us began to shuffle circuitously toward the Capitol steps. I just didn't have the heart anymore. I made for the nearest Metro stop. On my way, I passed piles of those pro-choice signs, and a small group of protesters standing silently on a street corner. They were holding signs that read "I regret my abortion."

That, I thought, would be a good starting point for Democratic politicians. It would allow them to acknowledge that every woman would rather *not* have an abortion, and that might enable them to talk more genuinely about the impossible situations women who consider abortion face. It might humanize the mothers, and allow Democrats to argue for all the health benefits to women and their families when abortion is legal, without sounding so darn cheerful about it.

Talking about the human element of abortion also might help lessen Democrats' dependence on the vocabulary of "rights," which John Kerry invoked during his campaign. (While insisting on a woman's "right to choose," he also said, "I oppose abortion, personally. I don't like abortion. I believe life does begin at conception.") The language of "rights," Elizabeth Cavendish, interim president of NARAL, told me, mainly speaks to the college-educated crowd. For others, she says, the left needs to talk about women's health, including sex education and birth control, and about the opportunity to make personal decisions based on personal values.

I'm certainly not recommending any backsliding on Democrats' actual support for abortion rights; de facto, it has become much harder to obtain an abortion over the last decade. But Democrats might do more to shore up support for access if they sounded less like the radical left. They could even use Bush as a model: He knows how to speak to the American people broadly while more quietly reassuring his base.

Americans are very, *very* attuned to the nuances of the abortion debate. In June, Gallup found that depending on the polls one looked at, Americans can be considered either 54 percent to 43 percent more positive than negative toward abortion, or 61 percent to 37 percent more negative than positive. "The differences in results," Gallup concluded, "appear to be related to question wording, suggesting that some people are so conflicted on the issue of abortion that even slight wording differences can move them from a positive to a negative view, or vice versa."

At a time when the smallest shift in the phrasing of a poll question can tip the scales, isn't it more useful, and more honest, to deliver a message that is sensitive to these nuances? ■

NATIONAL SECURITY

Insecurity Blanket

Kerry's foreign-policy problem was really his party's. It's time for Democrats to get serious once and for all.

BY MATTHEW YGLESIAS

ANYONE PURPORTING TO TELL YOU *THE* REASON JOHN KERRY lost the election is either fooling himself or fooling you. The origins of any close defeat are necessarily multicausal, and any number of different things could have won it for Kerry.

The media chose to focus on the party's "values" problem. To be sure, that problem exists. But the focus on values misses the other important factor in this election: national security. The Democratic Party has simply never recovered the credibility on national-security issues it lost during the Vietnam era.

The security problem is not—as the right would have it—that the Democrats are still saddled by Vietnam-era reflexive dovishness and lack the toughness to lead the nation in times of peril. Through the 1990s and the early 21st century, national-security thinkers aligned with the Democratic Party have outlined a tough-minded, sophisticated approach to the world. These thinkers—Rand Beers, Richard Holbrooke, Richard Clarke, and others—have emphasized the rising importance of international threats coming from nonstate actors and the need for multinational (and multidimensional) responses to these nontraditional threats, and to the traditional state threats. It's an approach that should have been ideal for confronting the war on terrorism, and should have proven politically appealing in light of the evident failure of the Bush approach.

Since the end of the Cold War, the problem has usually not been that a sound Democratic approach to national security doesn't exist. The problem is that its content—and, indeed, its existence—continues to be a closely guarded secret of which the American people, the press, and, most damagingly of all, the party's elected officials and candidates for office are almost entirely unaware.

Writing in the December 2002 issue of *The Washington Monthly*, Heather Hurlburt, a speechwriter in the Clinton administration, related that during the 2000 presidential campaign, she was asked by then–National Security Adviser Sandy Berger to start working on a speech in which he would lay out the Clinton approach to world affairs. That the Clinton administration found itself, at that late date, still facing the

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need to explain what, exactly, it had been doing through eight years in office—punctuated by several uses of military force—is fairly astounding.

Therein lies the origin of the problem faced by the Kerry campaign. George W. Bush, or any other Republican candidate for office, can rely on the existence of a large and fairly well-known set of conservative national-security thinkers, ideas, and policies dating back to the Nixon years. Without knowing anything about any Republican in particular, voters know what Republicans stand for.

On the Democratic side, meanwhile, there's a vacuum. Though new policies and new ideas were formed during the '90s, only a few widely recognized national security figures emerged from his administration, and no grand concepts were put before the public for consideration. As a result, the glaring political vulnerability on national security that left the Democrats almost entirely shut out of the White House from 1969 to 1993 persisted. The end of the Cold War and the perception that foreign policy no longer really mattered allowed Bill Clinton to succeed, temporarily. But even in 2000, the party paid a price for its neglect of foreign policy and national security as part of the communications strategy.

National security was hardly a high-profile issue in 2000. Nevertheless, it played a role in Al Gore's razor-thin defeat. Though there was a very plausible national-security case to be made for Gore, he evidently didn't communicate it to voters; exit polls tell us that the 12 percent of the population that cited "world affairs" as the top issue favored Bush 54 percent to 40 percent, making national security Bush's second-best issue after taxes. The same exit polls showed that 47 percent of the electorate believed the military had weakened under Clinton compared with just 17 percent who believed it had become stronger. (Hurlburt's speech, by the way, was never delivered; the political team didn't think it was important.)

So, through the Clinton era and the Gore candidacy, the Democrats' problem in this arena was largely one of perception. But after September 11, as security returned to the top of the policy agenda, it became one of substance as well. Rather than recognize that security as a hot topic was here to stay for the foreseeable future, the party's elected leaders in Congress hoped to take it off the table by ignoring it. The Clinton-era national-security professionals were out of office, but instead of recognizing a political need for Democratic politicians to begin consulting with the party's experts and to produce a grand strategy for winning the war on terrorism, they did nothing.

Democrats watched—with occasional carping from the sidelines—as the administration began outlining and implementing a radically unsound policy agenda. Over time, the failings of the Bush approach became evident and the president's approval rating sank. But the public was never convinced that the opposition had outlined a coherent alternative—largely because it hadn't.

In late 2003, Democratic Representative Jim Turner of Texas, ranking member of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, tried to address the problem [see "A Simple Plan," *TAP*, June 2004] and directed his committee staff to begin just such a process of consultation and strategy formation. The resulting document, "Winning The War On Terror," was solid policy and potentially winning politics. But after its release on April 27, 2004, it sank like a stone. When I spoke to Turner shortly after the plan's release, he had high hopes that party leaders with more clout than he would pick up the banner he'd raised. Instead, they ignored it.

When Kerry finally got around to elaborating his national-security agenda, its content—from strengthening homeland security, reforming intelligence, expanding special forces, and emphasizing education aid and other programs to building civil society in the Arab world—was remarkably similar to what Turner had put forward. But by October 2004, the public was still largely unaware of Democratic plans, less a result of Kerry's failings than of the tough position he'd been put in by everything that came before him. Matt Bai's exposition of Kerry's foreign policy for *The New York Times Magazine* is suffused with a sense of surprise that the writer had discovered a coherent agenda lurking at the heart of Kerry's presidential campaign. Mostly this wasn't Kerry's fault. Rather, it reflected the larger Democratic legacy to which Kerry was heir. (Indeed, James Traub made a similar discovery with regard to the party as a whole in the January 4 issue of the same magazine after attending a foreign policy conference co-sponsored by the *Prospect*.)

Turning things around in the future doesn't require better campaign tactics or a more charismatic candidate. It requires a change in the party's strategic approach so that national security is no longer an afterthought handled by a small number of specialists. Democrats, and liberals more generally, must recognize that public concern about Islamic radicalism and America's response to it will be a permanent feature of the landscape for the foreseeable future. The brief vacation from foreign policy and national security that American politics took in the 1990s was the exception, and not something that's likely to return. In response, liberals must think about what they want to do substantively regarding national security as a core government function (besides Social Security, the military is, after all, the largest source of federal expenditures), not an unfortunate distraction from the "real" issues. Security policy, like other policy areas, will always be a realm of political machinations, but Democrats must learn to convert electoral positioning and cherry-picking of the latest headlines into tactics that serve some coherent strategy. Most importantly, Democrats outside the community of specialists must acquaint themselves with the lines of thinking present in the party.

Before the election, there was some sign that Democrats were waking up to this. I had lunch with a senior Democratic congressional aide who was working on putting together a cross-chamber group of members to start discussing the substantive issues with one another and with experts inside and outside Congress. In the immediate aftermath of the election, some of this momentum seems to have dissipated in favor of a broad conversation about coping with "values" issues. Such discussions are appropriate, but should not be allowed to displace continued work on the security front.

The election results were disappointing, but they provide an opportunity. My advice to Democrats is this: Take a deep breath, then start considering what you really believe about Iraq, terrorism, military and intelligence reform, and all the

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rest. Then start talking about it. Don't worry if at first you get attacked or ignored. You must convince people that you have real ideas of your own, not just opportunistic criticisms. So start thinking, then start talking. Then keep at it. ■

GAY MARRIAGE

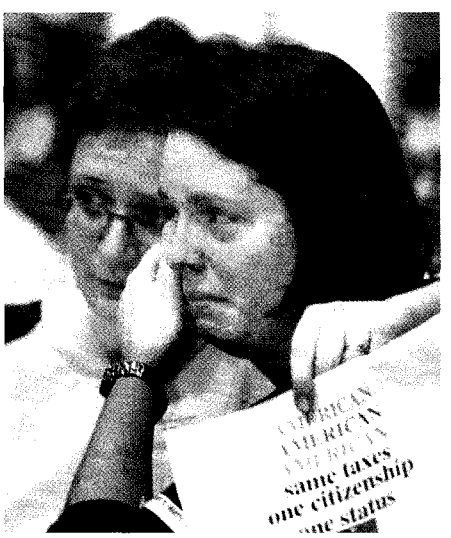
Wedding-Bell Blues

It's possible that Democrats could have fought this one to a draw if they had emphasized discrimination.

BY SARAH WILDMAN

ON OCTOBER 28, AS DEMOCRATS SCRAMBLED VOLUNTEERS to Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Florida, Philip Burress, chairman of the Ohio Campaign to Protect Marriage, was so confident of victory that he wasn't even in the state. Burress had championed Issue One, the anti–gay-marriage amendment, and had secured a place for it on the ballot just as the legal time limit for ballot initiatives was about to close in late September. But his campaign was rolling along so nicely in the days leading up to the election that Burress left for Tennessee, where he spoke to pastors about his presumptive win. "I vote values," he said that day, well before that word took on the weight it would in the weeks to come.

The 11 anti–gay-marriage ballot initiatives are playing a starring role in the Democratic hunt to understand how the party missed four-fifths of the 22 percent of Americans who claimed "moral values" as their top election priority. "This has been a galvanizing issue,' says Carrie Gordon Earll, a spokeswoman for James Dobson's far-right Focus on the Family. "It was the homosexual activists who elected [George W.] Bush. ... They have infuriated the people."



The Crying Game: Is gay marriage doomed?

Some Democrats, it seems, might agree. The day after the election, Democratic Senator Diane Feinstein told a San Francisco conference that gay marriage had come "too fast, too soon, too much," implying that the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court's decision and San Francisco's mayor had played some role in John Kerry's defeat. A Kerry campaign leak revealed that Bill Clinton, from his hospital bed, had advised the candidate to support the amendments.

But the problem went far beyond what position Democrats took on the amendments. It was that they failed to discuss the rights of gay men and lesbians before the issue was co-opted by the right, that they did not anticipate the issue's key role in the presidential campaign, that they did not aggressively challenge these initiatives before they landed on ballots, and that they did not set up effective and well-funded education campaigns. But most of all, it was that they failed to frame gay marriage in a way that uncertain Americans voters could support it: that discrimination—no matter who it is against—is immoral, unconstitutional, and, most of all, un-American. Had they done so, there's evidence that the party could have countered the religious concerns about gay marriage by bringing out a significant anti-discrimination vote, especially from moderates. And, in the process, they might have been able to tar the GOP as the party of bias, not values.

The first thing Democrats might have done to win the battle over gay rights is to fight state by state to keep the measures off the ballot. It seems self-evident now, but fear of alienating socially conservative Dems kept the party mum. In the trenches, activists felt abandoned. "When we were trying to keep this off the ballot, we were given everything short of ... help," says Alan Melamed, who chaired Ohioans Protecting the Constitution, a group that fought the Buckeye State's anti–gay-marriage amendment. A frustrated Melamed laments that the party wanted to "keep [its] hands off" the issue.

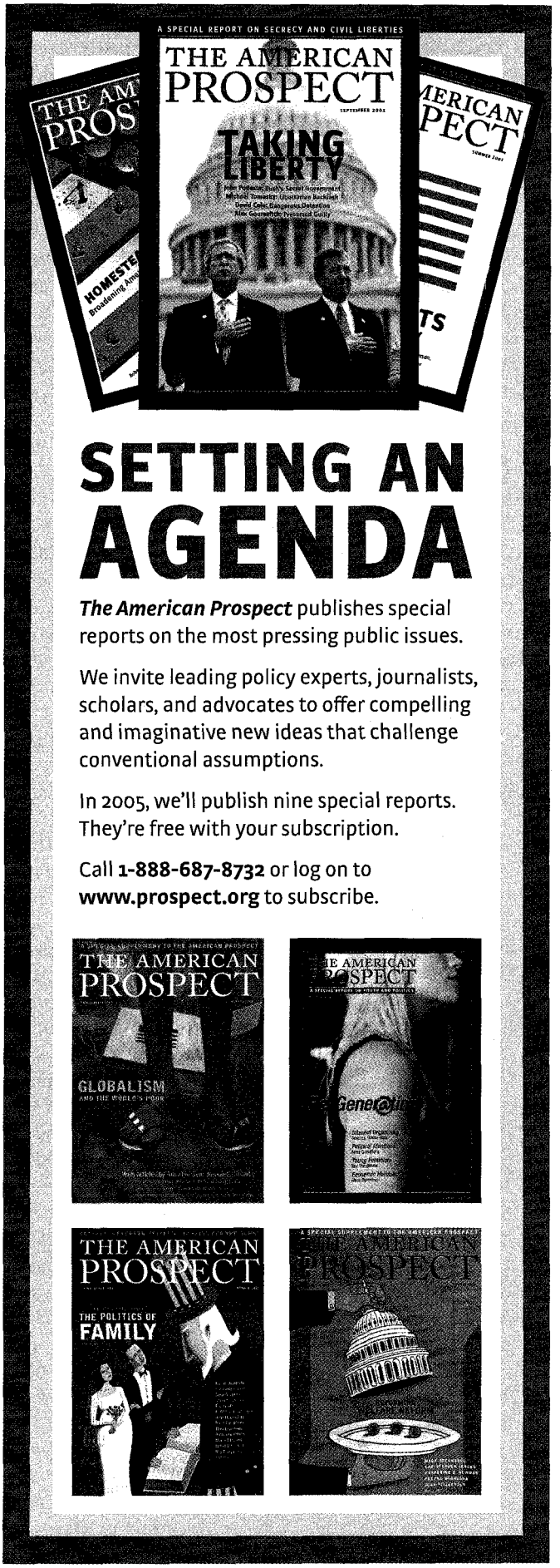
Melamed says he spoke to volunteer lawyers connected to the Democratic Party, but vague promises for help with media buys and door-to-door canvassing on the issue never materialized. "We made requests and never got affirmative responses," he remembers. "Shoot, if they had given us $2 million we [could have] hammered it home, particularly when we were trying to keep it off the ballot." As for Melamed's direct dealings with the Democratic Party, he says, "I could never even get to a decision-maker."

The far right, by contrast, had the explicit support of the Republican Party. As *Salon* reported in October, the Republican National Committee blanketed Ohio with direct mail that screamed "Traditional Values Are Under Attack From the Radical Left," and urged that "one vote" could "protect marriage." Bush himself announced in a July radio address that the Massachusetts decision had sent a "message to the next generation that marriage has no enduring meaning." And Bush's chief strategist, Karl Rove, made the 11 marriage amendments a cornerstone of his get-out-the-evangelical-vote campaign, enlisting the help of prominent Republicans and national Christian organizations. "I've gone and given speeches in a lot of states to try and increase energy level and enthusiasm," explained Gary Bauer, head of the right-wing nonprofit American Values, on election day. "I do a daily e-mail that goes to 100,000 activists around the country. We have promoted these state initiatives; we have held rallies in a number of states—one in Tupelo, Mississippi, with 15,000 people, one in Raleigh, North Carolina, with 14,000."

This support from Washington translated into some extraordinarily aggressive efforts in states voting on gay-marriage amendments. In Oregon, the state that was crowned "most likely to defeat its amendment" because it had successfully fought off anti-gay ballot initiatives in the past, support for the measure came in ugly forms. Oregon's defense-of-marriage coalition sent out direct mail and called

BRIAN SNYDER/REUTERS/LANDOV

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voters claiming that "gay sex would be taught in schools and a 'gay lifestyle' would be taught to kindergartners," according to Rebekah Kassell, communications director for Basic Rights Oregon, a gay-rights group. Kassell says "push-poll" calls claimed "voting 'no' would lead to same-sex marriages, which would lead to abortion," and that "30 years of social-science research showed kids needed a mother and father or would turn to crime, drug abuse, suicide, violence, dropping out of school, and teen pregnancy." With so much support for the amendments, the opposition was barely heard. "It became like a tree falling in the woods," Melamed sighs.

The Democrats could also have worked harder to reframe the question in ways that would be palatable to the middle-of-the road voter. "Same-sex marriage," explains William Lunch, a professor at Oregon State University, speaking the week before the election, could have had "the effect of highlighting in minds of suburban voters the idea that the Republican Party is the party of intolerance." Even Bush recognized this risk: On October 26, he told Charlie Gibson on ABC's *Good Morning America* that he supported civil unions. "You have to ask the question, 'Why is Bush making more visible his support for civil unions?'" says Lunch. "It was done ... to reassure suburban voters who are inclined to vote for Republicans. [It says], 'It's safe to do that without voting for someone who is essentially a bigot.'"

Still, there are reasons to believe that Democrats could have made inroads with voters if they had just loosened up some resources and begun to reframe the question. Polls taken in September by Ohioans Protecting the Constitution showed that 53 percent of the state supported civil unions, a number not terribly dissimilar from the national figures. (Exit polls on November 2 found that some 60 percent of all voters believed in some form of legal recognition for same-sex couples, either through marriage or civil unions.) In Oregon, Kassell tells story after story of swaying voters, including persuading a family that had a "Yes on 36" sign on its lawn to vote against the amendment. "Often it was the opportunity to have the conversation that moved people from a 'yes' to a 'no,'" says Kassell. "I think ... many people had not even considered all the ways their relationship with their families were protected through marriage and how many rights and responsibilities came with that. When they looked at that they moved to the 'no' side."

That message took in a few places. In Ohio, the Republican leadership—Senators Mike Dewine and George Voinovich, as well as Governor Bob Taft—joined by AARP came out against Issue One, claiming the measure was too "ambiguously worded." In Michigan, many Catholic churches came out against their amendment because it appeared "to create serious and undue hardships for a whole class of citizens."

Still, in the end, as Burress predicted, even Oregon voters voted "yes" on their amendment. "To be a state facing this kind of campaign and to not have leadership at the national level saying the right things was really tough," says Kassell, who is gearing up to challenge the amendment. "This was about much more than marriage."

If only the Democrats had understood that. ■

SARAH WILDMAN *is a* Prospect *senior correspondent.*

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God and the New Deal

The men who made the New Deal and built the CIO were secular liberals and socialists. But they knew that to succeed, they would have to accommodate traditional religion.

BY HAROLD MEYERSON

SO THE DEMOCRATS ARE HAVING TROUBLE WITH THE POLitics of cultural traditionalism? So what else is new?

To be sure, the gap in the electorate between the observant and the secular is widening. But it's just one part of a larger cultural rift that the Republicans have long realized (as far back as Richard Nixon) is central to their success. Since Nixon's announcement that he stood with the "silent majority" against the noisy protesters, the Republicans have practiced a form of identity politics, championing the more traditional culture of Middle America against its putative cosmopolitan threats. Indeed, magnifying those threats has become the linchpin of the Republicans' presidential-election strategy.

Even before the Republicans learned how to fully exploit it, however, the tension between modernity and tradition had long been a challenge for Democrats and liberals—as far back, in fact, as the early years of the New Deal. Then, the tension occurred chiefly within the Democratic base, for the party that Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his lieutenants inherited was largely a collection of traditional, hierarchical, and distinctly unliberal fiefs, whether big-city organizations in the North or segregationist machines in the South. And yet, Roosevelt and his liberal lieutenants—and even the socialist organizers of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the CIO, who provided the shock troops for building and cementing the New Deal—understood that they could not proceed without winning some support from traditionalist communities that had often been, and would often be, arrayed against them. Roosevelt, CIO founder John L. Lewis, and other New Deal architects were building a majoritarian politics, which entailed reaching out to and compromising with traditional institutions in ways that liberals would do well to reflect on today.

There was, in fact, a clear religious component to the New Deal. No group was more central to the Roosevelt coalition than America's urban Catholics, whose Church looked favorably on the New Deal's tilt toward the poor but also at times looked askance at the secular federal bureaucracy the New Deal erected to help those poor. After all, the New Deal substituted secular state and labor institutions—Social Security, welfare, and polyglot industrial unions—for an earlier order of church- and ethnic-specific charities and not very diverse craft unions, none of which was remotely capable of dealing with the crisis of the Great Depression.

SUPPORT FOR THE NEW DEAL WAS SO OVERWHELMING among working-class voters that it's easy to forget how many of the pre–New Deal working-class organizations were ambivalent about key elements of the New Deal itself. In 1933, as Roosevelt's administration was just setting up shop, William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, the AFL, testified against government relief, voicing an ambivalence shared by Church and local Democratic leaders who were accustomed to delivering relief themselves. In that year, a conflict over that very issue arose in Chicago. With national unemployment standing at greater than 20 percent, the newborn Federal Employment Relief Administration (FERA), headed by Roosevelt lieutenant Harry Hopkins, had become the nation's federal unemployment and relief agency, providing survival money to millions. Chicago Archbishop (later Cardinal) George Mundelein understood full well that the Catholic charities had nowhere near the funding required to see Chicago's Catholics through the economic collapse, but he argued that FERA funding going to Catholics should be channeled through the archdiocese's charities.

This ran counter to FERA policy everywhere else in the nation, not to mention to the separation of church and state. But Mundelein and Roosevelt were old friends, Mundelein was very close to Chicago's Democratic Mayor Edward Kelly, and Hopkins was an arch-pragmatist. Mundelein's request was granted.

The most celebrated and notorious Catholic of the New Deal era was radio priest Charles Coughlin, the Rush Limbaugh and Bill O'Reilly of his day. On his weekly nationwide radio broadcast, the Detroit-based Coughlin was a staunch FDR supporter during the initial years of Roosevelt's presidency. He approved of the first phase of the New Deal, the National Recovery Act, which rejected laissez-faire capitalism and endeavored to replace it with a managed economy that balanced opposing social interests—echoing Catholic economic doctrines propounded by Pope Leo XIII in his 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* and by Pius XI in his 1931 *Quadragesimo Anno*. By 1935, however, Coughlin had split with Roosevelt over the issue of America's recognition of the World Court (the very kind of issue that today's talk-show fascisti also love to demagogue). The cosmopolitanism of the New Deal and the new CIO was increasingly unbearable to the anti-Semitic Coughlin, and by 1936 he was attacking "Franklin

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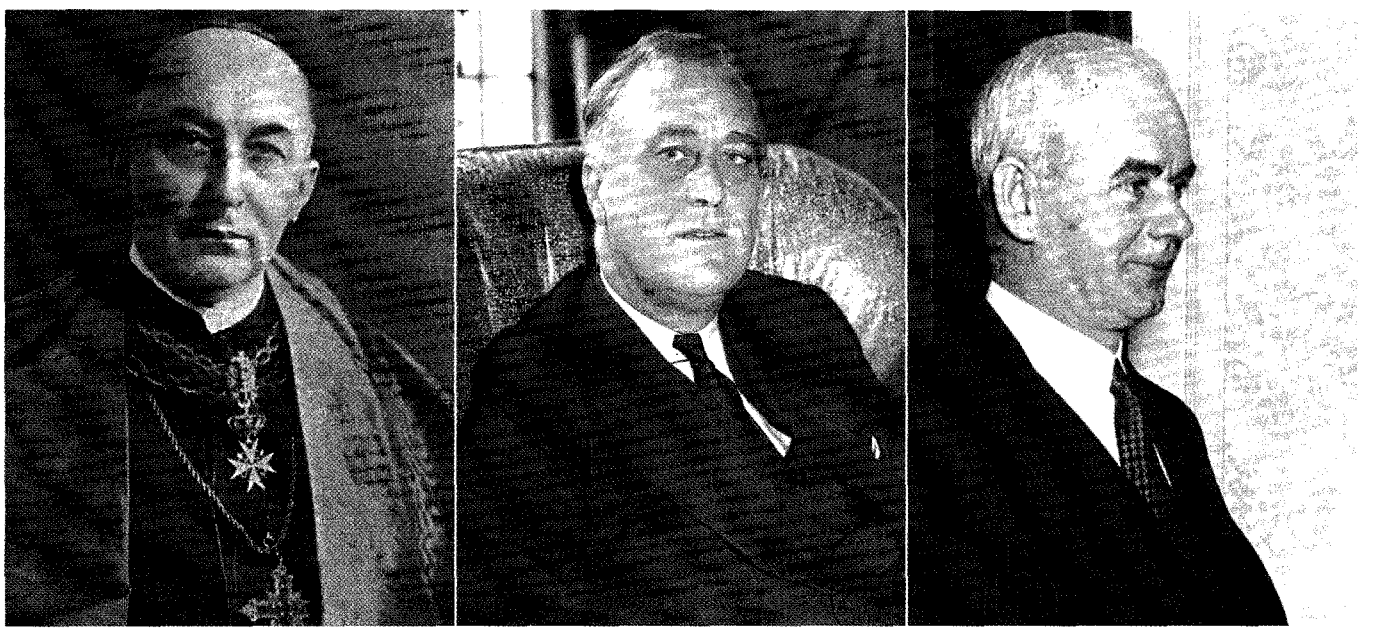
Double-Crossing Roosevelt" in every broadcast.

Initially Roosevelt sought to keep Coughlin in the fold, sending such prominent New Deal Catholics as Joseph P. Kennedy and Frank Murphy, who'd recently been mayor of Detroit and was soon to become governor of Michigan, to try to rein him in. But Coughlin had made up his mind, and as the 1936 election drew near, he was calling FDR a "liar" and a "communist."

Coughlin's hardcore following was real, and a decade and a half later, its ranks swelled by anti-communism and the Cold War, it reconstituted itself as Joe McCarthy's base. But in the '30s, Coughlin was no better than the second-most persuasive voice on radio; the most persuasive was Roosevelt himself. Establishing a bond with working-class Americans through his "fireside chats," his relief, pension, and labor policies, and his role in bringing big-city voters into a governing national coalition, Roosevelt was hugely popular with the Catholic laity, as Coughlin's listeners made clear to the priest through hundreds of thousands of irate letters whenever he attacked FDR. Catholics knew that Roosevelt championed their cause as no president before him had. Of the 214 federal judges appointed by FDR's three Republican predecessors—Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover—there were only eight Catholics. Roosevelt made 196 judicial appointments; 51 were Catholics. The laity understood that one of the things that was new about the New Deal was that they were included.

But Roosevelt also had allies within the Catholic hierarchy, and he made sure to showcase them whenever possible. Foremost among these was Monsignor John A. Ryan, a professor of political science and moral theology at Catholic University and the longtime director of the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Council. Inspired by *Rerum Novarum*, Ryan helped create a distinctly Catholic brand of American economic progressivism. (His dissertation, completed in 1906, was titled "A Living Wage.") In 1936, in an address he called "Roosevelt Safeguards America," Ryan took to the airwaves to denounce Coughlin's attacks on the president. Ryan also delivered the invocation at FDR's 1937 and 1945 inaugurals.

Ryan's labor Catholicism probably claimed the allegiance of several million adherents during the New Deal years. Among the most prominent were New York Senator Robert Wagner, who authored both the National Labor Relations Act and the Social Security Act, and Philip Murray, the first president of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) and the second president of the CIO. There were other prominent Catholics among the CIO's early leaders, but there were just as many who were secular socialists, communists, and anti-clericals—and among the CIO's organizers, the secular leftists constituted a clear majority. In recent decades, historians have given short shrift to the role of anti-clericalism in shaping the '30s left, or at least the upbringing of '30s leftists. But the Church in the pre–New Deal first decades of the 20th century had been vehemently anti-labor and anti-socialist, a fact impressed upon many of the children who went on to build the CIO by their radical parents. Julius Emspak, the first secretary-treasurer of the United Electrical Workers, once recalled how his mother had forced a gravedigger to pry the cross off of his father's coffin.



The O'Roosevelt Factor: FDR (*center*) made common cause with Cardinal George Mundelein of Chicago (*left*) and Philip Murray, the Catholic steelworkers' president.

But whatever the secular and socialist inclinations of the CIO's organizers, they knew that to organize America's factories in the 1930s meant organizing Catholics; a plurality of CIO members were Catholic. Cultivating the Church—certainly the clergy who identified with Ryan's social Catholicism—was critical to building the CIO. In Chicago, Auxiliary Bishop Bernard Shiel became a champion of the Packinghouse Workers; in Buffalo, Father Charles Maxwell was an adviser to the USWA; in Pittsburgh, Father Charles Rice defended the unions and became a confidante of Murray's. Delivering the benediction at the CIO's first convention, Rice declared, "A victory for labor in its struggles for decent conditions is a victory for Americanism and Christianity."

As historian Michael Kazin has noted: "The CIO clearly

TIME LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES; AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTO (2)

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liked to advertise its ties with the Church. The political imprimatur helped to blunt the sting of red-baiting attacks on labor, especially by foes with a pious reputation. At every national CIO convention from 1938 to 1946, the opening invocation was given by a priest or bishop from the host city. No Protestant or Jewish clergymen enjoyed anything like the prominence that such priests as Shiel [and] Rice ... had as speakers at labor forums and writers for union publications."

The CIO, in turn, asserted a selective commonality of purpose with the Church. "Once humanity becomes the measure of both organized religion and organized labor, we can push forward together toward the good life," proclaimed a CIO pamphlet on religion. "Both labor and religion put their faith in the people, believing in power *with* not *over* them." The priests who helped build the CIO—most of them affiliated with the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU), founded by some of radical Dorothy Day's acolytes in 1937—initially defended the unions against the red-baiting attacks to which they were constantly subjected. "Never let the red herring of communism fool you" into turning anti-union, Rice cautioned the steelworkers. By the 1940s, though, and particularly with the end of the Popular Front and the advent of the Cold War, the ACTU leaders became often the most vehement opponents of the communists in the CIO unions—some in principled coalition with the Reutherites in the battle for the United Auto Workers (UAW), others engaging in the very kinds of over-the-top red-baiting they had warned against a decade earlier.

During the '30s, it wasn't only Catholic clerics on whom the CIO relied to help organize factory workers. The first president of the UAW, Homer Martin, was a onetime Baptist minister who, in the words of UAW historians Irving Howe and B.J. Widick, "spoke with other-worldly fervor; his language was colored by Biblical phrases; no other man could pierce to the hearts of Southern-born workers as he could." Martin thought nothing of announcing at one NAACP meeting in 1937 that, like Jesus Christ, "I come to you tonight representing the poor, the oppressed, and the exploited people, both colored and white." Martin's eccentricities appalled his fellow UAW and CIO leaders, but his appeal to the southern whites who'd come to Michigan to work in the auto plants was undeniable—and useful. After he'd been ousted as president, he endeavored without success to set up a rival auto union, complaining, as Coughlin did, of the dominance of left secularists in the UAW. By then, though, the UAW had become too vibrant and important an institution to the autoworkers for them to turn against it for ideological, much less theological, reasons.

THERE'S A HISTORICAL LESSON IN THIS FOR TODAY'S LIBerals: At the high-water mark of 20th-century liberalism, both the liberals who built the New Deal and the radicals who built the industrial-union movement cultivated and made marriages of convenience with traditionalist institutions—the Church above all—when it served the larger cause. They never doubted the need for such alliances; they never hesitated to build them when they could.

And they took pains to avoid offending Catholic opinion, even at the risk of betraying their own deepest principles, if offending that opinion would weaken or split their unions. Not a single CIO union passed a resolution in support of the Spanish Republic during its civil war with the Catholic fascists of Francisco Franco. Though some of the socialist and communist leaders of those unions had comrades who were fighting in Spain, they knew that any such resolutions would bring down the wrath of the Church, which they feared their unions could not easily withstand.

However biased or outlandish the traditional institutions of the New Deal era may now seem, today's progressives could be forgiven for wishing they had them back. Most of today's evangelical churches have little if any record of involvement in social-justice causes; their idea of religion is the "thou shalt not" strictures against sex and tolerance that make up the worst of the Old Testament. The Catholic Church has not abandoned its social-justice tradition—look at the living-wage coalitions in cities that have enacted such ordinances and you'll frequently find the Church—but following the lead of a more conservative Vatican, the Church has relegated its concern for justice to a secondary position while emphasizing traditional family and gender roles.

The CIO, fearful of bringing down the wrath of the Church, never passed a resolution in support of the Spanish Republic during its civil war with Franco's Catholic fascists.

In the heart of traditionalist America, meanwhile, the economic populist impulse and the demand for social justice still live. On election day in the Bush state of Florida, 71 percent of voters backed an initiative that established the state's first higher-than-federal minimum wage.

For now, though, the struggles for social justice in red-state America are few and far between. A massive drive to organize Wal-Mart could change the face—and perhaps the political color—of the South, but it is a task of daunting vastness. Campaigns to organize the hotel workers of Orlando, Florida, the casino workers of Mississippi, or the janitors of Houston and Miami are more plausible, as are living-wage drives in southern and midwestern cities and campaigns against outsourcing. Such efforts could offer a way to reach out to traditionalist churches and traditionalist voters with whom Democrats have few points of connection these days—not the hard-right evangelicals who are America's most diehard Republicans but swing voters who don't cotton much to either cultural or economic elites.

It may be that most evangelical churches will remain stubbornly indifferent to such ventures, and that it would take a new depression to fully revive the Catholic Church's concern for economic justice. Cracking the Republicans' red-state lock will be anything but easy, but joining red-state voters and endeavoring to enlist their churches in a common struggle or two (or more) would be a good way to begin. Liberals have certainly done it before. ■

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Staying the Course

The fight isn't over; it's just begun. And progressives have more ammunition than you think.

BY ROBERT L. BOROSAGE

THIS ONE HURTS BIG. BUT PROGRESSIVES HAVE LITTLE TIME for grief or recrimination. George W. Bush claims a mandate for his radical domestic agenda and for his preemptive foreign policy. The dollar has already begun to fall and interest rates to rise. The evangelical right is clamoring for advancing the jihad against gays and choice. The corporate lobby is salivating at the coming feeding frenzy. Democrats, particularly those in red states, are shaken and ready to retreat. Progressives had better take a clear look at what happened and get ready to fight.

Karl Rove and the Republican chorus are claiming that Bush won this election with his vision and positive agenda. Bull—Bush won by waging the election we witnessed. The voters who returned Bush to office by a narrow margin are not enamored of his record or his policies. An election-day poll sponsored by the Institute for America's Future and undertaken by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research showed that a broad majority of the voters that returned Bush to office were looking for a change. By 51 percent to 41 percent, they thought America was substantially on the wrong track. By 49 percent to 45 percent, they thought the war in Iraq was making us less safe.

On issue after issue, they were closer to progressives than to Bush. Bush claims a mandate to privatize Social Security, but by 57 percent to 40 percent, voters preferred preserving Social Security to setting up "private retirement accounts." The corporate lobby claims a mandate for free trade, but by 58 percent to 33 percent, voters believe we should enforce labor rights and environmental protections in trade accords and challenge China rather than sustain current policies and train displaced workers. By 54 percent to 40 percent, voters thought our "first priority" in economic policy should be "investing in education, health care, and energy independence" rather than "reducing the deficit and government spending." Contrary to Bush's agenda, their strongest mandates for president and the Congress are to protect Social Security and to provide Americans with affordable health care.

A separate Web-based poll by Luth Research, meanwhile, found that 90 percent of voters favored a "crash program" for energy independence, echoing the call of the Apollo Alliance for new jobs and freedom from foreign oil. Sixty-seven percent wanted federal funding for stem-cell research. Exit polls show a majority opposed to outlawing abortion and for tolerance of gays. More self-described conservatives voted in the election, but the majority is not with the right.

Despite all that, Democrats are right to be shaken by Bush's victory. Republicans seem to be building an unassailable citadel in the South and much of the Mountain West, all while challenging Democrats in states from Minnesota to Michigan to Oregon. And the Republican mobilization effort, enlisting volunteers and anchored in evangelical churches, is forbidding. Those churches are growing; union halls are declining. The right has the potential for an organizing base that will increase even as the core of the Democratic base declines.

This has led Democrats to start talking about reconnecting with the "morals" voters, clothing liberal policies in the language of the gospel. Talking about values rather than programs always makes sense. And in this religious country, it is clear that leaders who are comfortable in a church—from Martin Luther King Jr. to Jimmy Carter, Jesse Jackson to Bill Clinton—have an advantage over more secular leaders.

But moral rearmament can go too far. Democrats must resist a desire for symbolic push-off politics—embracing the constitutional amendment against gays, abandoning affirmative action, ducking on anti-abortion judges. Democrats have paid a political cost for standing for civil rights, women's rights, and now the rights of gays and lesbians. But as Republicans discovered in California after Pete Wilson won re-election by bashing immigrants, Republicans can also pay a cost for being the party of intolerance and white sanctuary.

Progressives now stir the Democratic drink. We provided the party with its voice, broke the hold of big money in the primaries, proved the potential of small donors over the Internet, and provided the volunteers, the passion, and much of the money for this election. We're not about to allow the party to backslide on choice or human rights.

THE KITCHEN-TABLE APPEAL

Are progressives thus fated to lose elections to a politics of fear and division, to watch stranded on the two coasts as the heartland ushers in a new dark age? Many think so, but take another look. In the Institute for America's Future poll, a majority of Americans said they wanted candidates to explain how "you'll make the economy and health care better for people" rather than how "you'll make us safe."

But the Kerry campaign never really got there. John Kerry devoted his convention to establishing his credentials to

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lead the country in wartime, with economic issues barely mentioned. After floundering for months, Kerry finally found his voice on Iraq, and the debates removed doubts about his ability to be commander in chief. But Kerry never developed a compelling argument about the economy and how he would fight for working people. Had he the equivalent of John Edwards' "two Americas" speech, would it have made a difference?

The Greenberg poll shows that wavering voters who ended up going with Bush were even more interested in economic questions than most. These included seniors, who are the most socially conservative sector of the society, but also the most concerned about health care and Social Security. It includes non–college-educated white women, the most vulnerable economically. Many of these voters held out until, not hearing a compelling argument on the economy, they voted their social conservatism or their security fears and swung to Bush in the last weeks.

Could economics trump moral concerns or security fears? The AFL-CIO and associated unions made a concerted effort to reach their members largely on kitchen-table issues—the export of jobs, overtime pay, soaring health-care and college costs. An election-day poll by Peter D. Hart Research Associates reports that while white men in general voted for Bush by a margin of 18 percentage points, white men who were union members went to Kerry by 21 points. Weekly churchgoers favored Bush by 21 points; if union members, they went Kerry by 12. Gun owners chose Bush by 20 points; if union members, they preferred Kerry by 12.

White males in the three states targeted by the AFL-CIO backed Bush by 23 points; but if they were part of Working America, they went to Kerry by a 21-point margin.

The AFL-CIO's "secret weapon," its Working America program, showed that it did not require a lifetime of union membership to produce this effect. Working America used paid canvassers to enlist more than 750,000 largely nonunion, blue-collar workers in three states—Ohio, Florida, and Missouri—as associate members, providing these voters with education on kitchen-table issues. The Hart Research tracking polls leading up to the election showed white males going to Bush by 23 percentage points; but if they were part of Working America, they went to Kerry by 21. Married women in those states voted Bush by a margin of 13 points; if in Working America, they favored Kerry by 23.

Democrats should surely nominate candidates who are comfortable talking about values and are respectful of the faithful in this deeply religious country. But Democrats will never compete as the party of fundamentalism, provincialism, or intolerance. Kerry proved that a Democratic commitment to collective security can compete with Bush's preemptive unilateralism. But in the end, the best hope for eroding the right's appeal to the faithful is a powerful populist appeal to their bread-and-butter, kitchen-table concerns. This requires more than a bunch of good policies; it requires a compelling argument that proves the Democrats are ready to fight for their concerns.

THIS FIGHT IS NOT OVER. TRUE, BUSH AND THE RIGHT WILL drive the debate. But they will also rouse the opposition. The renewed offensives in Iraq will increase doubts about the president's war of choice. His budget will feature cuts across the board in education even as he seeks a $70 billion supplemental for Iraq, sparking public anger at misplaced priorities. Bush's first Supreme Court nominee is likely to be an intentional outrage to reward his base. House leaders will push early for a vote to write bigotry into the Constitution with the amendment banning gay marriage.

While opposing the above, progressives should mobilize now to challenge the president's economic agenda—privatization of Social Security, making his tax cuts permanent, and "tort reform," which will come up first. Progressives should use this debate to open a major attack on House Majority Leader Tom DeLay and the most corrupt Congress in memory. At the same time, progressives should be putting forth alternatives, like countering the president's drill-and-spill energy plan with the Apollo Alliance's plan for good jobs through energy independence. Progressives should also gear up a national campaign for a higher minimum wage, and make DeLay's arrogant refusal to even allow a vote in the House on raising the minimum wage a statement of what side the right is on.

Opposition works. It defines differences and forces responsibility. In 1992, after Clinton was elected and Democrats controlled both houses of Congress, Newt Gingrich and the right launched a relentless attack on the president and all of his initiatives. Two years later, Republicans nationalized the mid-term elections and swept Democrats out of the majority for the first time in 40 years. In 2000, by contrast, Democrats rolled over after Bush stole the election, gave him his tax cuts, endorsed his power to make war on Iraq, and chose to have no national challenge to his economic policies. Instead, Bush nationalized the election, assaulted the patriotism of Democrats, and rolled them in the off-year elections.

Progressives drove the Democratic Party debate this year and turned out the largest vote any candidate has ever received (except one). The Democratic vote exceeded that of Ralph Nader and Al Gore combined four years ago. And the institutions and organizations that got engaged were often built from scratch like America Coming Together, or moving to an entire new level of action, like the Association for Community Organizations for Reform Now and USAction and the Hip-Hop Nation.

This fight isn't over; it has only just begun. Rove's strategy roused the fundamentalists into action, but the president's policies will continue to provide progressives with a disaffected majority to engage. ■

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All Action, No Talk

The Democrats do a very good job of mobilizing. But they're not so great at persuading.

BY JEFF FAUX

A CALIFORNIA LABOR UNION LEADER ONCE DESCRIBED TO me the 1966 campaign to re-elect Democrat Pat Brown as governor. "We had a massive campaign to identify our voters," he said, "we contacted everyone at least twice, and we did a tremendous job of getting them to the polls on election day—where they voted for Ronald Reagan."

This year, labor and its Democratic allies mobilized their voters more effectively than ever before. They began early, raised lots of money, and recruited thousands of inspired volunteers who helped raise the turnout for the Democrats in the battleground states. Moreover, the political stars seemed to be in alignment: the flat economy, sky-high gas prices and health-care costs, and corporate scandals—and the incompetence of the administration every day on issues from Iraq to flu vaccine.

"We know how to do the ground campaign," explained a campaign official on election night, when we regrouped at a campaign headquarters in suburban Philadelphia as early reports of a big turnout in battleground states tempted us to dream that we had a blowout. "We have the people and we know how to use them," he said. "The Republicans are way behind."

John Kerry did win Pennsylvania (but barely, 51 percent to 49 percent). Still, as we Democrats sift through the wreckage of this last campaign, it is clear that the crash was not caused by any failure to mobilize our constituency. We turned out our people, they turned out theirs. But their campaign on the ground had something else going for it: It was built on a long investment in a grass-roots infrastructure aimed at convincing voters beyond their base. They have been at this for a while, and we continue to ignore it at our peril.

TO BE SURE, MANY OF US THINK THAT OUR CANDIDATE was flawed and the message confused. We who cheered Kerry's debate performances in retrospect now see more clearly the stiffness, the policy-wonk language, the transparent effort to present this windsurfing Brahmin as a regular guy. We who were outraged by the charge that he was a flip-flopper still don't know what Kerry really thinks about the war in Iraq, or what he would have done very differently.

But we Democrats chose Kerry with eyes wide open. We thought his lack of clear definition and his split-the-difference moderation would make him more "credible" with swing voters. He didn't need a clear vision; imagery would be enough. He was a war hero to contrast with the draft-dodging George W. Bush. Kerry's incoherence was ours, reflecting the party's widespread lack of confidence in its own message.

In part this incoherence stems from how the message is created. While the grass-roots center-left—labor, environmentalists, the activist nongovernmental organizations—are expected to mobilize the voters on election day, the message they carry is in the hands of the party's Washington-based centrist managers. Heavily influenced by lobbyists, they try to formulate language that keeps the faithful motivated and at the same time does not alienate their corporate clients. Not surprisingly, the message is compromised and foggy, and neither the party's rank and file nor its leadership is able to articulate very well what the party stands for.

Under these circumstances, Democratic candidates end up with laundry lists of small-bore "good ideas" aimed at getting the support of separate constituencies while assuring Wall Street that they are for budget surpluses and low taxes. This strategy looks like political pandering, and it allowed Bush—a habitual liar and budget buster—to convince the voters that he was more honest than Kerry.

To use Winston Churchill's phrase, the Democratic pudding lacks a theme; it does not tell a story about how the world works. When Republicans wage class warfare, Democrats retreat, afraid to make their most convincing case: that government ought to be an instrument for fairness. In both the 2000 and 2004 debates, George W. Bush, who promotes government power on behalf of his constituencies, accused Al Gore and John Kerry, respectively, of being in favor of big government. Gore hastily changed the subject. Kerry told the audience that his health-care proposal was not "government-run," which anyone over the age of 12 could tell was not true. Never once did they turn to Bush and challenge him. Big government? What are you against, George? The U.S. Army? Social Security? The national parks? Who here wants to eat meat not inspected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture? Should we shut down the Centers for Disease Control?

When Gore raised the class issue, his Washington advisers shut him down. When Kerry tried it, the language came out stilted and unconvincing. In an electorate with almost no knowledge of history, how many people out there knew what a "Benedict Arnold" corporation might mean?

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OUR CANDIDATES WILL NOT GET BETTER AT THIS UNLESS we get better at it. Defining what the party stands for in clear language is too important to be left in the hands of the campaign managers, the pollsters, and the consultants. Among other things, this means broadening the responsibilities of the party's rank and file. Hard as it is, we need to take a lesson from the opposition. Democrats use their rank and file to mobilize the persuaded. Republicans use theirs to mobilize and to persuade.

Much has been written about the right-wing successes in the battle of ideas—generously funded think tanks, infiltration of the media, takeovers of university economics departments, etc.—but the far more important part of the advance of conservative ideology is what goes on in the neighborhoods and living rooms.

its allies have been systematically training people at the local level to proselytize and persuade. After the election, *The Washington Post* reported that Ohio Republican volunteers had held "thousands" of "parties for the president" in their homes, where they brought in their neighbors to listen to the case for Bush. In large halls or community-college auditoriums, audiences are passive listeners; participation means one quick question from people who are willing to stand up in a crowd. In living rooms, there is time for reflection, time to develop a sense of community. You are with neighbors.

This politics of persuasion requires patience, commitment, and a genuine interest in conversation. The Republican neighbor sees his political role not simply as cannon fodder at election time or as a check writer but as someone with a political avocation. Someone who is part of a movement.



Lonesome Town: By the time the campaign rolls around, persuasion is too late.

On election day I canvassed with a union activist who works in a supermarket. He lives in a Philadelphia suburb, down the street from a Republican who periodically tries to recruit him to join the GOP. "Not going to happen," laughed my election-day comrade. "I'm union and a Democrat, just like my father was. ... Still, he isn't a bad guy. And sometimes he makes some good points."

"Has anyone ever asked you to recruit for the Democratic Party?" I asked. "No," he shrugged. Had anyone ever asked him to explain to other people what it means to be a Democrat? "No."

I trust my friend will remain a Democrat. And yet 40 percent of union members vote Republican. So do substantial numbers of people who we think of as being in liberal constituencies—environmentalists, women, Latinos. This Republican neighbor will pick up some recruits and votes throughout the years. Multiply him by thousands and the mobilization task for Democrats gets harder and harder.

This is not an isolated phenomenon. For more than a decade I have seen evidence that the Republican Party and

Persuasion politics goes on all year, every year, between elections. By the time the campaign rolls around, persuasion is too late. Mobilization takes over and it is, by its very nature, short term and top down, while its style is to harangue. There is no time for conversation in a mobilization effort. Canvassers and phone bankers are instructed not to get into conversations about politics because it takes too much time. Identify your voters and move on quickly.

Exit polls must be approached with caution, but the patterns suggest that the Republicans succeeded with a politics of persuasion as well as mobilizing their base. Contrary to first impressions, we were not overwhelmed in 2004 by a massive mobilization of new Christian fundamentalist voters. Compared with 2000, Bush's big improvements were beyond his base. He gained in the urban areas more than he did in rural areas, in the Northeast more than in the South. His biggest percentage increases came from white women, Latinos, and elderly voters—historically more Democratic-leaning groups—who were persuaded to move to the right.

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Despite the two-party system, political ideology is not clearly divided into two camps. Most people do not buy into the entire "liberal" or "conservative" packages. Within many, an inner Democrat and an inner Republican struggle for control. And the most effective way to strengthen one side—as the Republicans have learned—is personal one-on-one contact.

DEMOCRATS HAVE LOST SEVEN OF THE LAST 10 PRESIdential elections. Since 1968, I have heard the defeated tell the brokenhearted faithful—as John Edwards eloquently did this year in his concession speech—that they have together begun a movement that will ultimately prevail and change America.

Then the phones are disconnected, the rented headquarters abandoned, and we all quite naturally go back to our lives, our jobs, our families. Sometimes the disorderly pile of canvassing and phone-bank sheets—marked with information about the targeted voters—goes right into the parking-lot Dumpster. Sometimes the crumbled material is saved in a cardboard box and put for a while in a basement or closet, where it gets thrown out the following spring.

Republican narrative. Rather, it means learning to articulate our own narrative—secular, rational, and aimed at engaging the public on the issues of America's future.

Democrats used to be the party of the future. Now we are perceived as the party of the past, trying to survive simply by defending a narrowing circle of New Deal programs. These must be defended. But to go on the offense we need to raise the larger, grander questions about the kind of America we want. Do we want everyone to have access to affordable health care? Should everyone willing and able to work have a job? Do we want to reduce the workweek? Do we want America to be the world's police officer? Should we root out the role of money in politics?

This is our territory. A majority of Americans do not want a theocracy, do not want government in their bedrooms—or in bed with crony capitalists. And most want government to be on their side, and would like to see politics as an instrument to shape their future and the future of their children. Forcing the other side into a serious debate about the future can also reveal the narrowness and ultimately nihilistic core of right-wing ideology, which has nothing to say about the future of ordinary people here on earth.

The rank and file, the small contributor, the volunteer has little contact with the "movement," except to send checks to the Democratic National Committee.

Among the party's leaders there is much talk about the need for better language to communicate our values, to rethink the strategies, to have a broad, honest discussion, and so on. The consultants and the political directors and the pollsters go off on closed-door retreats to ponder these questions—and start thinking about next year's mayoral race and whom they will work for in the New Jersey gubernatorial.

But the rank and file, the small contributor, the volunteer has little contact with this "movement," except to send checks to the Democratic National Committee and new organizations that promise to lobby in their name for progressive causes. He or she is basically forgotten about until we head toward the next election. Then the fund-raising letters stream in, and the activist is "mobilized" for the next great crusade to elect someone who is better than the Republican.

Meanwhile, under the radar screen, the Republicans keep recruiting and training their people on how to argue politics and spin ideology to their neighbors, and through this process they are building a base of people beyond the hardcore fundamentalists and the chamber of commerce.

We do need new language. And the way anyone develops language is through conversation, not by giving lectures or scripting 30-second spots. And the way voters—and potential political persuaders—will learn the language of our politics is if we go out and talk to them *between* elections as well as during elections. In short, we need to build a people-to-people infrastructure to challenge the Republican army on the ground.

This does not mean a headlong embrace of the Republicans *message*—what they have defined as moral values or Bush's vision of Pax Americana. This would trap us further in the

Democrats who knocked on doors and worked the phone banks and stuffed the literature should be tapped and trained to start talking to their neighbors, practicing and learning the language and the arguments to convince potential Democratic voters that jobs are more important than the right to own an AK-47, that health care is a family value that might be more important than your distaste for gay marriage.

Yes, the Republicans have some advantages. They benefit from an evangelical constituency with a proselytizing tradition. And their talk-radio networks give them a well-developed echo chamber. But we Democrats also have strong institutional bases—in labor, the environmental movement, and the liberal churches (and, as of last month, we had 49 percent of the electorate as well). It's not so hard to imagine these institutions' members being encouraged and trained to engage the other side in debate. Why not develop a national network of people sharing talking points, effective language, and strategies for infiltrating talk radio? And if more of our people get engaged, our own struggling liberal talk-radio shows will have an expanding audience.

Of course, empowering the Democratic rank and file to take responsibility for debate and message is risky for the party's governing CEOs. It means giving up some control, and taking a risk that the language that emerges might be a little too populist for their comfort. Just before the election, one Washington Democrat, confident of victory, dismissed the idea as romantic. "That's not how we do politics," he said.

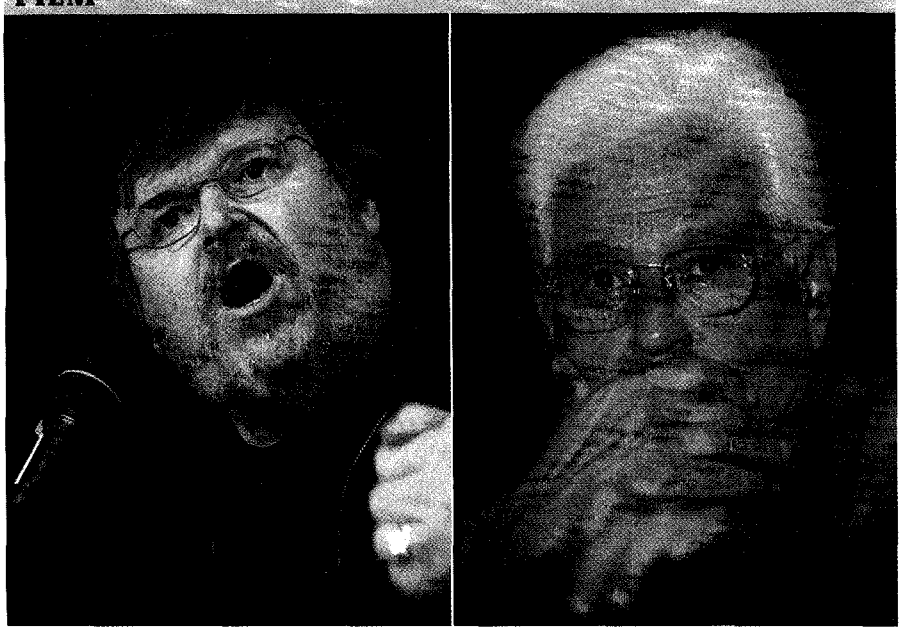
It's time we learned. ■

JEFF FAUX *was the founder, and is now Distinguished Fellow, of the Economic Policy Institute.*

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Currents

FILM



Moore Is Less: Could Michael Moore (*left*) have learned more from Jacques Derrida?

What's Up, Docs?

It's impossible not to sympathize with liberal documentary filmmakers' political impulses. But there's a different progressive ideal that's been lost.

BY NOY THRUPKAEW

"WHO KNOWS?" KEN CORDIER ASKED, by way of an answer. It was a moment of uncharacteristic uncertainty for the Swift Boat Veterans and POWs for Truth member and former Vietnam War prisoner of war, who had just been asked by an audience member whether there are any POWs remaining under Vietnamese control. Cordier and his former comrades—be-suited, be-medaled, standing with that indelible military posture—were fielding questions after a special screening of *Stolen Honor*, a documentary attacking John Kerry's "treasonous" anti-war activism.

During the question-and-answer period, the men were sure of many things, primary among them that in his anti–Vietnam War crusade, Kerry had written the first draft of history and tarred them as war criminals, swapping the truth with a story that served his political interests. When the *Stolen Honor* vets started bandying the word "epistemology" about, I turned to my hamburger, bored with the blah, honking certitude that had characterized so much of the cinema and the dialogue at the nation's first conservative film festival, which had hosted the screening. The American Film Renaissance was taking place in Dallas over the September 11 weekend, a strategic, if tacky, choice of dates. But at least the locale meant that good beef was a choice.

I tuned back to the speaker on the question of remaining POWs, because, for once, Cordier didn't have an answer. "Who knows?" he sighed. "They're Orientals with a different mind-set."

Outside the movie theater, Cordier backed up his assessment of "Orientals" with evidence, telling of his horrific POW experience in Vietnam, and those of prisoners under the Japanese in World War II. "Even an Oriental friend of mine agrees," said Cordier, and went on to speak with genuine warmth about this brother in arms, a South Vietnamese soldier who had also endured torture.

I interrupted. "Excuse me," I said, "this Oriental friend who is like a brother—could you explain what his different mind-set is? I'm, uh, Oriental myself, and was curious about your perception of our mentality." I waited, feeling hot, extremely indignant, and a little smug underneath the rage.

A long, long pause. And then ... "I'm sorry," said Cordier with unmistakable, shocking sincerity, grasping my wrist. I gaped at him. "That was a poor choice of words now, wasn't it? What I said in there—it's not true."

I considered Cordier's words and his unexpected about-face for the duration of the festival, paradoxically convinced that he meant both. The rest of the screenings—more than 20 full-length films—included a series of bloated George W. Bush hagiographies, conspiracy theories on the causal relation of gun control to genocide, and Michael Moore-esque attacks on Michael Moore. Festival audience members and directors protested moral relativism, decried un-American attacks on the American

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dream and U.S. foreign policy, and, mostly, lamented the gloomy fabrications about our proud nation dispensed by Hollywood and the academy.

The left has also waged political warfare with its films this year, including a collection of John Kerry hagiographies, conspiracy theories on the oil industry and the Iraq War, and Moore's attacks on the Bush administration, Paul Wolfowitz, and Wolfowitz's spit-shined comb. Lefty filmmakers have railed at how Republican strategies and policies denied the majority its president in 2000, and eroded our civil liberties and right to dissent since September 11. They've cried out against lies—about the Iraq War, Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction, the state of our economy—from the White House and its band of flying monkeys, the FOX News network.

The documentary is still a controlled experiment in paradox; it purports to *document* reality while also shaping that reality into a certain partisan message.

So which reality is more real: the right's rosy-hued utopia under siege by naysayers or the left's dystopia, suffocating under conservative "America, the Beautiful" mythology? The red-state, blue-state divide has become an abyss during this wartime election year, helped along by the films on both sides—political documentaries that have become increasingly uninterested in complexity and contradiction, that exclude differing opinions from their internal space. And it's a good question whether it represents artistic or even political progress to skew our interpretations so violently. And where do these lopsided depictions leave us in the aftermath of conflict, when the left and the right have to struggle to make a narrative together?

JACQUES DERRIDA IS DEAD. LITERALLY this time, as well as metaphorically, which his critics have been claiming for decades. The father of deconstruction made a mess, his detractors have declared, with his notions of the radical, decentralizing play of language, its relativity, its lack of absolutes. According to Robert Kimball's October 12 *Wall Street Journal* essay on Derrida's death, "By undercutting the idea of truth, the deconstructionist also undercuts the idea of value, including established social, moral, and political values." It's little surprise that Derrida should be so disliked by conservatives.

Progressives of a more rigid worldview might agree. For someone like Moore, who writes his documentaries in the blockbuster vernacular of good (us) versus evil (them) and tries to hector his viewers into a one-pointed interpretation of what they're seeing, Derrida's ideas would be rather vexing. Most progressives, however, find more to like than loathe in Derrida. His embrace of difference, his "power to the people" insistence that a reader should interpret on his or her own rather than scavenge for the author's singular intent—these ideas have inspired feminists, postcolonials, and many others to seek out voices too often relegated to the margins. This same urge can perhaps account for the lefty tendency to make documentaries—an art form that seeks out the untold, ostensibly drawing upon the vagaries and shifting perspectives of the ordinary world.

The documentary is still a controlled experiment in paradox, however; it purports to *document* reality while at the same time shaping that reality into a certain partisan message. As *The New Yorker*'s Louis Menand and film historian Erik Barnouw have noted, the documentary may emit whiffs of observational objectivity, but the history of its own creation points out the lie: The documentary's past is littered with bossy opining, sound engineering, set-piece sleight of hand, and all-around auteurist meddling. In one example, famed animal documentarian Arne Sucksdorff was able to get a shot of an owl swooping down on a dormouse because he had fed the owl frequently; that time, he even proffered the victim.

But with their Moore-influenced offerings this year, liberal documentarians have tilted the balance of the documentary too far in favor of baldly obvious sloganeering. And they've largely abandoned the influence of intellectuals like Derrida in favor of, ironically, their one-note conservative counterparts. Films like *Bush's Brain* (hit piece on Bush adviser Karl Rove), *Howard Zinn: You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train* (glowing homage to the lefty historian), *Band of Brothers* (tribute to war-hero Kerry), *The Corporation* (indictment of big-business amorality), *Uncovered: The War on Iraq* (prosecutorial brief against the case for war), and, of course, *Fahrenheit 9/11* have taken partisan positioning to a troubling extreme. Dissenting voices are rarely heard; exaggeration is the rule. For a progressive intellectual movement that so claims to embrace nuance and multiplicity of interpretations, it's a poor showing.

All the same, it's impossible not to sympathize with the filmmakers' impulses. They are documenting in a political atmosphere created by the right, which has tarred the media as a "liberal consensus" and encouraged the seepage of opinion—conservative opinion—into news. Letting its "fair and balanced" flag fly, FOX broadcasts partisan "news" coverage and encourages a lowbrow culture of shouting punditry, neon headlines, and fear-mongering. Or so argues Robert Greenwald's *Outfoxed*, a fine piece of guerilla filmmaking that captures the ignoble sight of Bill O'Reilly, FOX's unmuzzled id, telling a Boy Scout and the son of a 9-11 victim, among others, to "shut up."

Outfoxed is a straight-up video editorial, like the other lefty political films this year. Perhaps it would be more in keeping with the progressive ideal for these filmmakers to balance their messages with a difference-based approach, as Derrida might say, rather than mimic the Bush administration in its fondness for internally generated mythology over empirical reasoning, so aptly described by Ron Suskind in his recent *New York Times Magazine* article. While partisan extremes may well be fought out in the gladiatorial ring of demo-

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cratic head butting, it would be more truly progressive—and perhaps more political convincing—to watch a director openly wrestle with contradiction and ambiguity within his or her work.

At the conservative film festival, I watched *Michael Moore Hates America*, a wonderfully and surprisingly self-reflexive meditation on the process of shaping reality into an editorial message. In an interview in the film, famed documentarian Albert Maysles critiques Moore's films for their one-dimensionality, then comments, "The essence of tyranny is the denial of complexity." It would seem that documentaries should, almost by definition, counter the tyranny of conventional narratives with alternative interpretations. "A politician who lives by mythologies may well look on the documentarist's work as subversive," notes Barnouw, in his survey of documentary history, *Documentary*. So why—as these lefty documentaries have so often done this year—ape that politician, pushing arguments that demand blind faith, belief removed from questioning and humility? Why not trade a few visual exclamation points for question marks, make dialogue with opponents more than a sight gag?

When I cornered Cordier, I was genuinely angry—and licking my chops at the chance for my own Michael Moore moment. Cordier had already been snagged once about his period of simultaneous tenure as a Bush veterans-affairs adviser and a Swift Boat Veteran for Truth. But when I prodded him in hopes of an easy "gotcha!" I wound up with a lesson straight out of Documentary 101. What happens when you try to provoke real people and real life and record what happens? As Cordier himself said, "Who knows?" You may get a more surprising truth than the one you imagined—and that makes for a better story in the end. ■

NOY THRUPKAEW *is a* Prospect *senior correspondent.*

BOOKS

Then Came the Hammer

THE HAMMER: TOM DELAY, GOD, MONEY, AND THE RISE OF THE REPUBLICAN CONGRESS BY LOU DUBOSE AND JAN REID · PUBLIC AFFAIRS · 306 PAGES · $26.00

ON CAPITOL HILL: THE STRUGGLE TO REFORM CONGRESS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES, 1948–2000 BY JULIAN E. ZELIZER · CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS · 376 PAGES · $30.00

THE AMERICAN CONGRESS: THE BUILDING OF DEMOCRACY
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HOW CONGRESS EVOLVES: SOCIAL BASES OF INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE
BY NELSON W. POLSBY · OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS · 257 PAGES · $29.95

LIKE NO OTHER TIME: THE TWO YEARS THAT CHANGED AMERICA BY TOM DASCHLE WITH MICHAEL D'ORSO · THREE RIVERS PRESS · 292 PAGES · $14.00

BY SAM ROSENFELD

"THIS HOUSE COULD PASS AN ELEphant if it chose," the legendary House Speaker Joseph Cannon said a century ago when Republican leaders used procedural rules and prerogatives to enforce a rigid discipline over the institution. Cannon was eventually toppled, but a century and a full cycle of institutional history later, Tom DeLay and Dennis Hastert boast as complete power over the House of Representatives as Cannon ever had. And therein hangs a tale.

The Republican leadership's tight control of the House has been one of the central realities of American politics since 1994, and with the GOP expanding its majority in this year's elections, that control will remain a fact of life for the foreseeable future. Few people, however, appreciate the irony that the Republican leadership owes its extraordinary power to a coalition of liberal Democrats who spent decades working for structural reforms of Congress. Long thwarted by powerful southern committee chairs, congressional liberals during the mid-20th century believed that they would increase the chances of passing progressive legislation only if they could strengthen the leadership's power to appoint committee chairs and decide what bills would reach the floor. Eventually, the liberals got the procedural changes they wished for—and conservatives reaped the benefits.

How such Democratic reformers as Hubert Humphrey and Philip Burton unknowingly laid the groundwork for the rise of Newt Gingrich and Tom DeLay is the most provocative aspect of the history recounted in Julian E. Zelizer's *On Capitol Hill*. Zelizer's book and several other recent volumes about the workings of Congress help to explain why Republicans have been able to pass major legislation despite thin majorities that would have led to political deadlock in the past.

Zelizer's story of congressional reform begins in the late 1930s and '40s, when, based on seniority rules, southern Democrats ascended to most of the major committee chairmanships in Congress and began using their power to kill liberal initiatives, mainly those pertaining to civil rights and labor, though occasionally bills addressing such issues as education. The committee-era House, as Nelson Polsby describes it in typically breezy fashion in *How Congress Evolves*, was "not unlike Jurassic Park, filled with very large, threatening, carnivorous committee chairmen who like[d] to dine on liberal legislation." Waging battle against these dinosaurs and their Republican allies was a counter-coalition of northern Democratic legislators with predominantly urban, labor-heavy constituencies. Convinced that liberal policies enjoyed a popular mandate, senators such as Humphrey and Paul Douglas and representatives such as Eugene McCarthy and Frank Thompson chafed against the cumbersome legislative apparatus that allowed conservatives to thwart change.

Shut out of congressional power, the

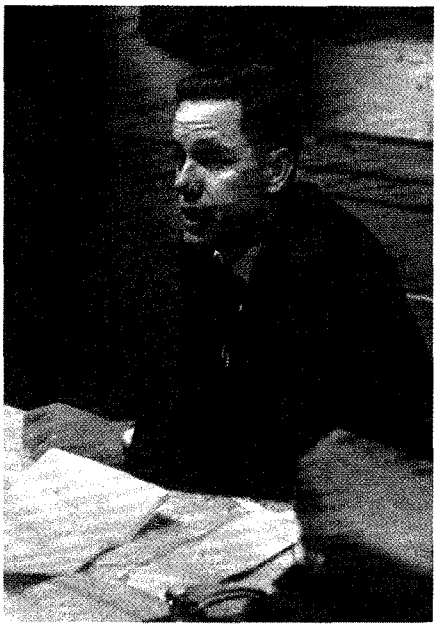
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liberals worked with such organizations as the AFL-CIO and the NAACP in waging sophisticated campaigns outside of Congress to put institutional reform on the agenda of legislators and elite opinion-makers. In the 1950s and '60s, civil rights served as the unifying battle cry of congressional reform. Zelizer's engrossing account of struggles over the filibuster in the late '50s and the fight to expand the House Rules Committee in 1961 nicely underscore the notion that institutional reform was an inextricable component of the great moral battles of the era.

During the 1960s, however, a crucial transformation took place, according to Zelizer. The reform coalition became committed to structural change in Congress as an end in itself, detached from liberal objectives. A new generation of suburban Democratic politicians, with weaker ties to labor and closer connections to the new social movements of the era, championed procedural reforms without worrying about whom they would bring down in the process. Legislators such as Pat Schroeder in the House and Walter Mondale in the Senate worked alongside new public-interest organizations to further weaken the autonomy of committee chairs, build up the resources of subcommittees, and strengthen ethics rules and standards of accountability. As Zelizer stresses, the reforms contained both centralizing and decentralizing elements. The overarching goal was to make the party structure in Congress not simply stronger but also more responsive to rank-and-file wishes and public scrutiny. The watershed elections of 1974, ushering in a congressional class of aggressively reformist "Watergate babies," ensured a final triumph: the toppling of four old-guard committee heads in 1975, the end of the "tyranny" of seniority, and the close of the committee era.

What would take its place? One of the deposed committee barons, 73-year-old Edward Hébert of Louisiana, exclaimed after his ouster in 1975 that "Common Cause is running Congress" and invoked the French Revolution to capture his sense of the chaos that was overtaking the institution. Despite his hyperbole, Hébert captured a truth about the instability that would characterize the post-committee era. The institutional reforms of Congress—together with a 24-hour news cycle and the rise of cable news channels—promoted scandal-mongering and partisanship. Zelizer and Polsby agree that instability and partisanship stand as perhaps the two defining characteristics of the new congressional era.

Polsby's slim, elegant volume offers an analysis of how that new era arose. His overarching argument is demographic and focuses on the rise of the Republican Party in the South and the myriad consequences of that regional realignment for the House as an institution. Though his focus differs some-



This Cannon got fired.

what, Zelizer tells much the same tale; indeed, he captures with more precision than Polsby the interplay between the rise of the right and the growth of congressional partisanship—and the ways in which liberal institutional reform hastened both developments. Republicans benefited from the reforms because they had the energy and vision to adapt to the new conditions. As Zelizer lays it out, during the late 1970s and '80s a determined faction of Republicans capitalized on the decentralizing elements of the reforms, such as new arrangements for congressional self-policing and investigation, to mire the Democratic leadership in scandal and disrepute.

Both Zelizer in his own book and Donald T. Critchlow in his contribution to the invaluable Zelizer-edited anthology *The American Congress* document the emergence of the fiercely partisan Republican faction led by Gingrich. Using innovative media appeals and televised floor speeches to rail against the "tyranny" of the Democratic leadership, these movement warriors had no use for the "half-a-loaf" strategies of compromise and comity preferred by their elders. Known by colleagues as the "Gingrich guerrillas," they were the vanguard of post-committee-era congressional politics. Gingrich specialized in slashing, personalized attacks on House speakers and managed to draw real blood from Tip O'Neill, Jim Wright, and Tom Foley in succession.

Once Gingrich and his faction had plied this strategy all the way to a congressional takeover in 1994, they swiftly switched tacks and moved to shore up the centralizing features of the post-committee system. They further tamed the committee chairs, concentrating unprecedented power in the party leadership, and shut the minority out of influence on legislation. These institutional changes marked the full and ironic realization of the old liberal reform agenda's centralizing impulse.

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, THE DAYS OF autocratic committee heads are now safely behind us. In Lou Dubose and Jan Reid's eye-opening new book about DeLay, *The Hammer*, we see example after example of committee chairs humiliated, browbeaten, or stripped of power, all at the behest of the House party leadership that DeLay has effectively controlled since the late 1990s. The book chronicles his intimidation of Henry Hyde, who as chairman of the Judiciary Committee during the impeachment crisis was open to a compromise with Democrats around a bipartisan censure of Bill Clinton. DeLay not only disabused Hyde of that notion; he also transformed the committee itself into a whip operation to follow the vote count for impeachment. DeLay reduced Ben Gilman of New York nearly to tears by threatening to strip his House Foreign Relations Committee chairmanship if he didn't vote for impeachment. Several years later, DeLay blocked Christopher Shays from advancing to the chairmanship of the

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Government Reform Committee as payback for the campaign-finance-reform bill that Shays helped to write.

In some ways, Congress has come full circle. Elizabeth Sanders and Eric Rauchway's incisive contributions to *The American Congress* highlight the tyrannical Republican speakers of a century ago, the "czars" Cannon and Thomas Reed. To modern readers, those speakers' tactics will seem unmistakably familiar. The key difference is that the czars faced a strong bipartisan congressional-reform coalition that ultimately brought them down. Nothing of the sort seems imminent in Congress today.

Both the top-down discipline and the partisan hostility of the Republican leadership are recurring themes in Senator Tom Daschle's engaging memoir, *Like No Other Time*, which chronicles his experience as party leader during the turbulent two years of the 107th Congress (2001–02). Daschle relished the spirit of bipartisan comity in the weeks following September 11, and he was startled by the rapidity and viciousness with which that comity was snuffed out by the Republicans. Unlike their counterparts in the House, senators have never been subject to tight party discipline. But Daschle offers ample evidence that the Senate is heading in the direction of the House's disciplined and bare-knuckled partisanship. After a sustained, nationally funded campaign of vilification against him in his home state, Daschle went down to defeat himself this fall—a loss not only for Democrats but for the cause of decency in congressional politics.

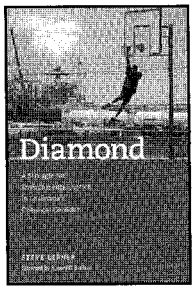
In both chambers, matters have only gotten worse during the past two years. As Robert Kuttner has shown in these pages [see "America as a One-Party State," February 2004], the litany of procedural abuses and autocratic tactics that the Republican leadership now employs as a matter of course is remarkable: closed votes, legislation drafted in conference, bills dictated entirely by the leadership, floor votes kept open past the time limit, rampant secrecy, and the barring of Democrats from genuine participation at the committee, floor, and conference levels. (Republican leaders managed to indulge virtually *all* of these abuses in the course of passing the Medicare bill in 2003, a process that unfolded as a kind of Grand Guignol horror show of legislative malfeasance.) As one revealing measure, Zelizer points out that the proportion of all legislation submitted with special rules preventing floor amendments increased from 15.7 percent in 1975–76 to 44.6 percent 10 years later; *The Boston Globe* recently reported that the figure for 2004 stands at 85 percent. As Barney Frank tells Dubose and Reid in *The Hammer*, "The House of Representatives is no longer a deliberative body. It's a plebiscitary system."

During 2004, 85 percent of bills came to the House floor with rules barring amendments. As Barney Frank says, "The House is no longer a deliberative body."

This system entails a much strengthened party leadership, but with none of the attendant responsiveness and accountability that the old liberal congressional reformers wanted. The dwindling ranks of GOP moderates and mavericks in the House have virtually no influence in their party's conference. (This is less starkly the case on the Senate side, though Jim Jeffords obviously has much to say on the subject of Republican marginalization of moderates, as does his friend Lincoln Chafee.)

Moreover, the impunity with which DeLay and his allies regularly engage in pay-to-play lawmaking and flagrant abuses of power illustrates a breakdown in the structures that reformers had intended to ensure congressional accountability. The three admonishments that DeLay received this fall from a normally torpid House Ethics Committee were shocking precisely because they were so atypical of this recent congressional era. It should be remembered, however, that the committee likely would have avoided taking even the meager action it did had not Ronnie Earle,

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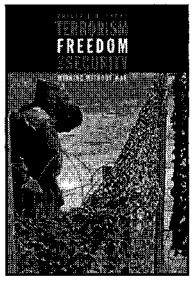


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the district attorney in Austin, Texas, indicted several of DeLay's cronies in a 2002 Texas fund-raising scheme, thereby creating unavoidable pressure for the panel to do something. DeLay's response to the admonishments—dismissive to the point of open contemptuousness—and the united public front of support forged by his House party conference are far more characteristic than the rebukes themselves of the current state of congressional accountability.

The new Congress is unlikely to bring much change in this regard, unless the Republicans go even further in restricting the influence of the Democrats. The House GOP expanded its majority slightly in November, while Senate Republicans gained four seats. The election results have only vindicated DeLay and Hastert's intensely centralized party rule in the House (Democratic efforts to topple moderate GOP incumbents by linking them with DeLay's leadership style and scandals failed in November) and Frist's intermittently partisan tactics in the Senate. The plebiscitary system that the GOP has forged out of the old liberal reform agenda will be with us for a while longer.

The beleaguered Democrats, meanwhile, seem likely to adjust by taking organizational steps that further intensify congressional partisanship and centralized party controls. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi has sought to tighten party discipline in the past two years through, for example, rule changes that expand the reach of the leadership in appointing subcommittee chairs. She is likely to take additional steps in this direction, using reform-era organizational approaches not to advance liberal policies over conservative obstruction, as they were originally meant to do, but rather to maintain as solid and effective an opposition as possible in the face of radical Republican legislation.

It is hard to overstate just how grim the Democrats' legislative position is, and how imperiled their prospects are of regaining House or Senate control anytime remotely soon. Gerrymandering and the fund-raising machine developed through DeLay's "K-Street Project" are the pillars of continued GOP rule in the House. Meanwhile, Democrats appear locked in a cycle of decline in the Senate, as the Republicans consolidate their control of all southern and most western and Plains state seats while the Democrats suffer retirements from members who see no prospect of regaining the majority and the party finds it increasingly difficult to field serious candidates. In short, the GOP appears to have a lock on Congress, and the very institutional reforms first spearheaded by liberal Democrats now give the Republican leaders the power to pass, in old Speaker Cannon's words, any elephant they want. ■



Should they pay a price for your low prices?

Big-Box Battle

SELLING WOMEN SHORT: THE LANDMARK BATTLE FOR WORKERS' RIGHTS AT WAL-MART BY LIZA FEATHERSTONE · BASIC BOOKS · 336 PAGES · $25.00

BY RUTH ROSEN

WHEN BETTY DUKES, A 56-YEAR-OLD African-American Wal-Mart worker in Pittsburg, California, first read about Sam Walton, the founder of the world's largest retailer, she felt inspired. "I learned that Sam Walton had a profound vision and started Wal-Mart on a faith venture," she said. "I have always deeply appreciated his visionary spirit and his efforts to reach for the stars." Never did she imagine that she'd become the lead plaintiff in a class-action sex-discrimination suit against Wal-Mart.

In *Selling Women Short*, veteran journalist Liza Featherstone uses this historic lawsuit as a way to explore and expose the new face of the working poor in America: low-wage, mostly female retail workers. In 2000, Dukes joined five other women in the largest employment-discrimination case ever brought against a private employer. The suit charges Wal-Mart with systematic discrimination against women in pay, promotion, and job assignments, and with maintaining a corporate culture that encourages sex discrimination.

Four of the six plaintiffs are Christian fundamentalists. Of the 100 women who have joined the suit, many are conservative Republicans who have never had much sympathy for feminism or unions. Most of them believed that Wal-Mart was a moral, Christian company where they'd be rewarded for their hard work. When they repeatedly bumped up against a corporate culture that ignored their talents and discriminated against them, they felt deeply betrayed.

Wal-Mart, for its part, argues that

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differences in pay, promotions, or other aspects of work have been due to different job descriptions and rogue managers. But according to the lead attorney for the plaintiffs, Brad Seligman, the corporation insists on a common culture in all its stores. In 2003, Seligman asked a San Francisco federal court to certify the case as a class-action lawsuit, which it did in June 2004. The lawsuit, which will probably take five years to settle, now represents a whopping 1.6 million former and current women who have worked at Wal-Mart since 1998.

Attorneys for the women workers have plenty of evidence on their side. Seventy-two percent of Wal-Mart's hourly workforce is female, but only 10 percent are district managers and regional vice presidents. Women routinely make less than men who have the same jobs. The few male cashiers, for example, earn $8.33 an hour, compared with $8.05 for the women. "The higher the management job," writes Featherstone, "the greater the gap .... At the store manager level, males earn $105,682 and women just $89,280."

At the center of the case is the women's claim that Wal-Mart, which began as a rural southern retailer, has remained stuck in a 1950s corporate culture that discriminates against its female employees. Women who worked in 184 stores in 30 states have testified that male managers forced their female counterparts to attend meetings at strip clubs or Hooters restaurants; told female employees, often single mothers, that they didn't need promotions or equal pay because "men needed to support their family"; and regularly referred to them as "little Janie Qs" and "girls."

Despite their initial success, both the plaintiffs and their lawyers know they've taken on a giant. Wal-Mart has grown into the nation's biggest employer (1.2 million people) and the world's largest retailer. It has more people in uniform than the U.S. Army. "If it were an independent nation," *The New York Times* recently reported, "it would be China's eighth-largest trading partner." In 2003, it banked about $9 billion in profits, which suggests the company could afford to pay its workers a living wage.

Wal-Mart is also infamous for its anti-union practices. As soon as it hears about any efforts to organize workers, the Bentonville, Arkansas, headquarters quickly dispatches a team of anti-union officials who fire activists or the merely sympathetic. Many workers, however, grew up in Sam Walton's culture and don't believe in unions anyway.

Dukes and the other women know that the lawyers, not the plaintiffs, stand to make millions if a class-action suit is successful. Yet they also understand that because union action is nearly impossible, only a class-action suit can threaten—or perhaps even change—Wal-Mart. "I am participating in this case," Dukes wrote in her sworn testimony, "in order to insure that young women such as my nieces and other women are treated fairly at every Wal-Mart store. The time has surely come for equality for women."

Featherstone is particularly good at capturing Wal-Mart's appeal to the overworked and underpaid American women who shop at the stores every week. The company's goal is to attract low-income women who appreciate the stores' easy parking, low prices, and one-stop shopping. In a few hours, a frantic working mother can get her glasses fixed, purchase medicines, and buy her groceries for the week.

Many of the women suing Wal-Mart for sex discrimination are conservative Republicans who have never had much use for feminism or unions.

And the prices truly cannot be beat. "As the nation's largest employer," writes Featherstone, Wal-Mart "has brought American women discrimination, disrespect, low wages and lousy health plans ... as a shopping destination, it's made them happy." But as Featherstone ably points out, such low prices and convenience come at a tremendous human cost to its workers. Wal-Mart not only pays its own employees poorly; it also sets wage and benefit standards for much of the retail industry. Ironically, taxpayers end up subsidizing Wal-Mart and similar companies by paying for the food stamps and government-subsidized health care their employees need for themselves and their families.

Engagingly written, *Selling Women Short* offers us a penetrating portrait of the lives of the women who have decided to fight back against Wal-Mart's degrading and humiliating labor practices. Featherstone is right to conclude, however, that a class-action victory would not fundamentally change the corporation. Although the suit may stop sexual harassment, women workers would still receive the same subsistence wages paid to male retail workers. Only unions and collective bargaining would give both female and male workers the collective power to raise their standard of living significantly.

Featherstone's unique contribution is to emphasize Wal-Mart's discrimination of women and to debunk the family, patriotic, religious, and bootstrap ideologies so successfully promoted by Wal-Mart. "Wal-Mart," she writes, "is not only showing an indifference to hard work dramatically at odds with the company's patriotic bootstrap rhetoric, it is also trapping them in overwork and poverty."

The national debate over Wal-Mart is also part of the larger political and cultural battle over the values and morals that will govern our society. Wal-Mart, for example, refuses to offer health insurance that covers contraception, won't allow its pharmacies to provide customers with emergency contraception (the morning-after pill), and censors the products it sells according to its religious values. Yet the corporation sees nothing immoral about refusing to pay workers a living wage that threatens to destroy the middle-class status once enjoyed by union members who have worked in the industry.

Betty Dukes wants her dream back. The trouble is that the rise of Wal-Mart reflects the decline of the American dream as working people have known it. ■

RUTH ROSEN, *a professor emeritus of history at the University of California, Davis, is a senior fellow at the Rockridge Institute.*

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Keeping the Faith

BY ROBERT B. REICH

Once again, Democrats are "rethinking" what they stand for. After previous defeats, such "rethinkings" resulted in rightward drifts. Democrats courted upscale suburban swing voters and steadily distanced themselves from the party's working-class roots.

They urged tax cuts for the middle class, welfare reform, and fiscal responsibility. After John Kerry's defeat, though, moving right could take on new meaning—accepting more restrictions on abortion, less tolerance for gays, more God in public places, and a more unilateral and militaristic foreign policy. No matter how cowed and dispirited they may be, Democrats mustn't succumb to this. But it is surely time for Democrats to take a moral stand for what they believe.

A moral stand is different from a religious one. George W. Bush conflated the two into a moralistic agenda—not just God and gays but also true grit in fighting the evils of Saddam Hussein and global terrorism. Kerry's was a policy agenda—middle-class tax cuts and fiscal probity along with affordable health care and a more "nuanced" strategy for combating terrorism. Bush spoke about right and wrong as matters of righteousness and faith. Kerry spoke of right and wrong as matters of strategy: He had the right way to get the economy moving again and to fight al-Qaeda; Bush was heading the wrong way.

Policies are important, but until Democrats address questions of public morality, they will inspire no one.

Americans didn't reject Kerry's policies. They just didn't pay much attention to them. It was Bush's moral vision that was more compelling. Kerry kept saying he had a "plan" for this and that, but after 40 years of mounting distrust in government, voters no longer take plans very seriously. It's when candidates speak with righteous indignation—with passion and conviction about what is morally right to do or morally wrong—that they can inspire. Kerry was more correct than Bush on policy, but Kerry's policies didn't inspire. Bush was wrong on policy (most Americans disagreed with him about the war in Iraq and the economy), but his conviction did inspire.

The lesson for Democrats is not to bring religion into politics. Religion must remain a personal matter. (One caveat: Democrats should be clear they want fewer abortions—not by prohibiting them but by giving young people access to contraceptives, family-planning counseling, and other social services.) The real lesson is that Democrats must project a moral vision of what America can become; do it with passion and conviction, and with faith that it can be achieved.

What moral vision? Democrats used to speak passionately about social justice, and it should still be the core of the Democrats' morality. It's morally wrong to give huge tax cuts to the rich while cutting social programs for the poor and working class—especially when the gap between the rich and everyone else is wider than it's been in more than a century. As to "family values," the nation has a moral obligation to give every child a good education and decent health care. And it's morally wrong that millions of Americans who work full time don't earn enough to lift their families out of poverty.

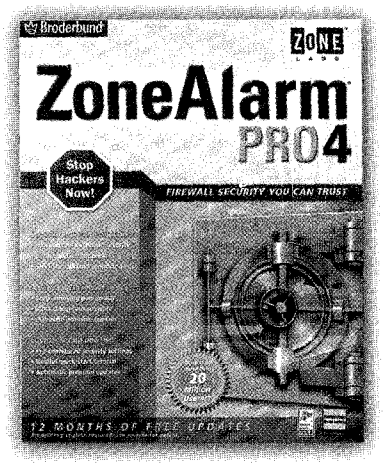
There's also an ever-larger issue of corporate morality. Executives who steal money from their investors and employees are morally reprehensible. Those whose companies are highly profitable but who nonetheless fire thousands of their employees at a time are, at the least, morally suspect. And our foreign policy raises the most fundamental of moral issues. It's morally wrong to kill more than 100,000 Iraqis and send more than 1,100 young Americans to their deaths for a cause that is still undefined and a war that was unnecessary.

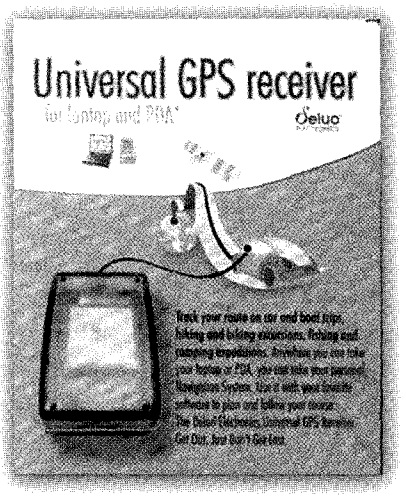
Democrats have never put their faith in a particular God or Scripture. Their faith has been that through working together we can craft a better nation and world. "Keeping the faith" has meant working against almost impossible odds, often without hard evidence that the work will bear fruit. It has necessitated boundless energy and absurd optimism even in the darkest times. That faith needs to be reaffirmed. Without it, progress toward a just society is not possible.

The right wing has fanned the flames of cultural populism, casting Democrats as elites who are out of touch with the needs and values of ordinary Americans. Rubbish. It's Republican elites who have turned their backs on average working people. The only way for Democrats to fight cultural populism is with an economic populism grounded in conviction and faith. Plans and policies are important, of course. But unless or until Democrats return to larger questions of public morality, they won't inspire a doornail. ■

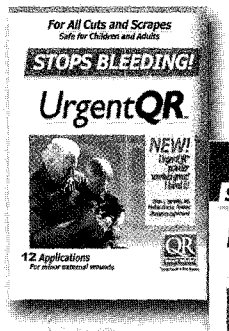
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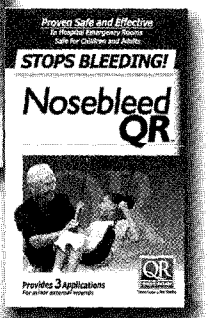
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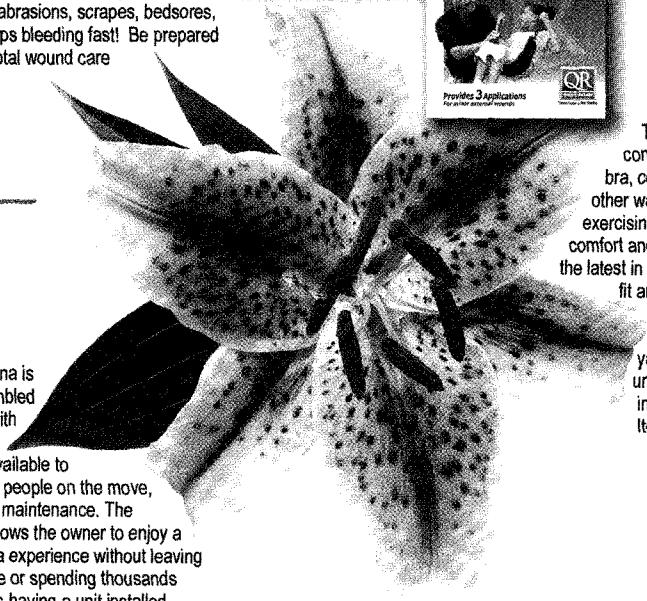
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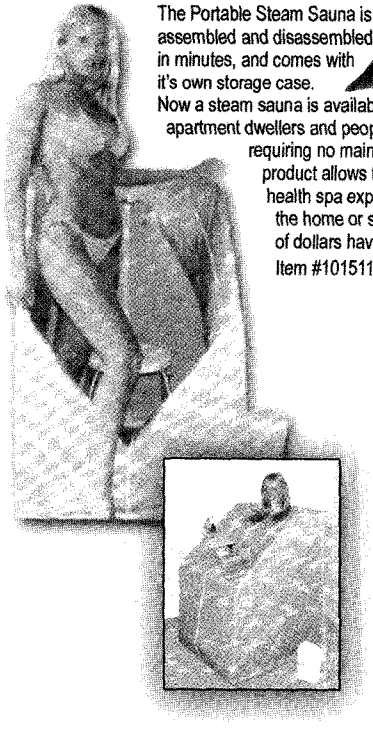


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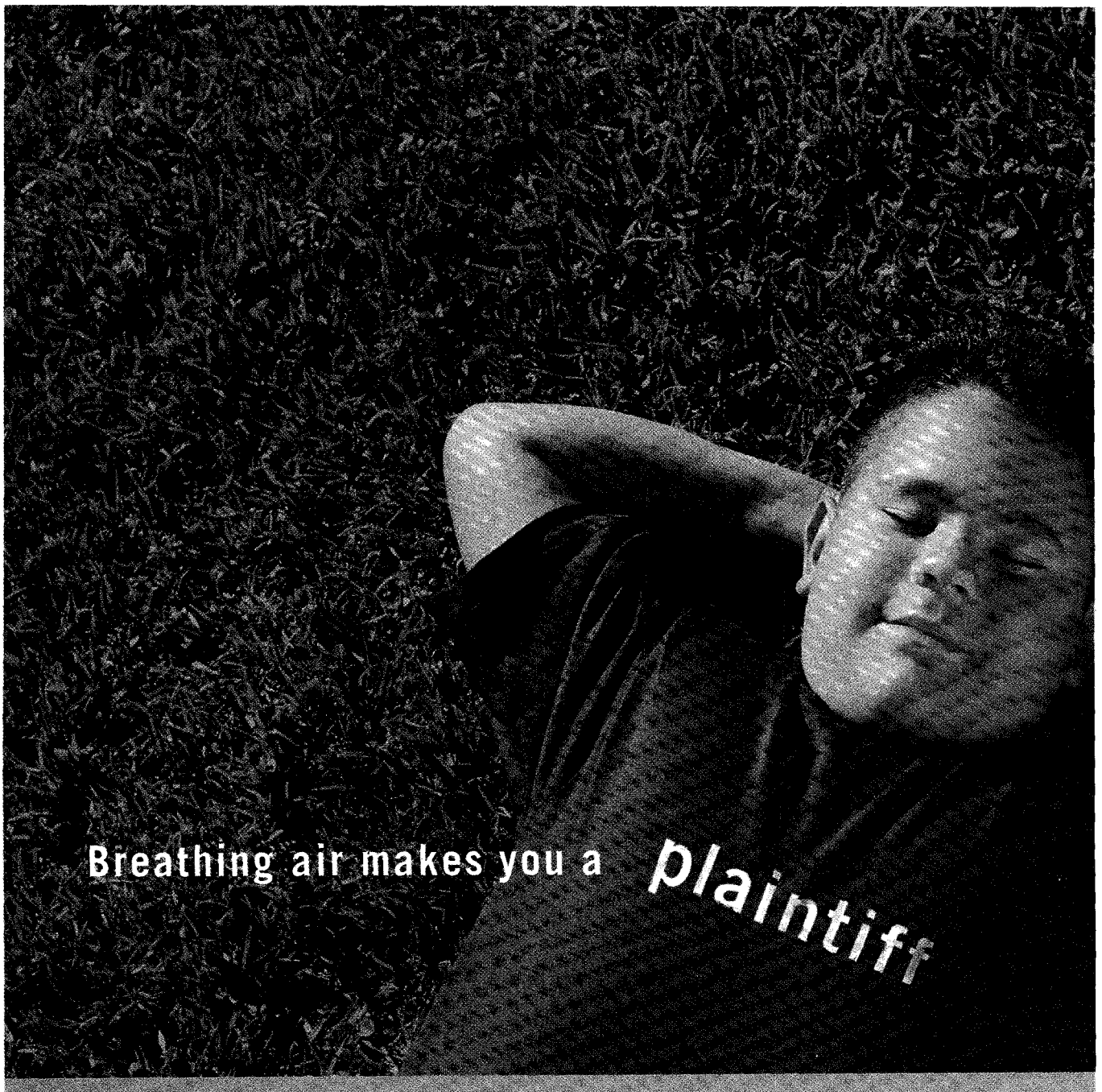
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